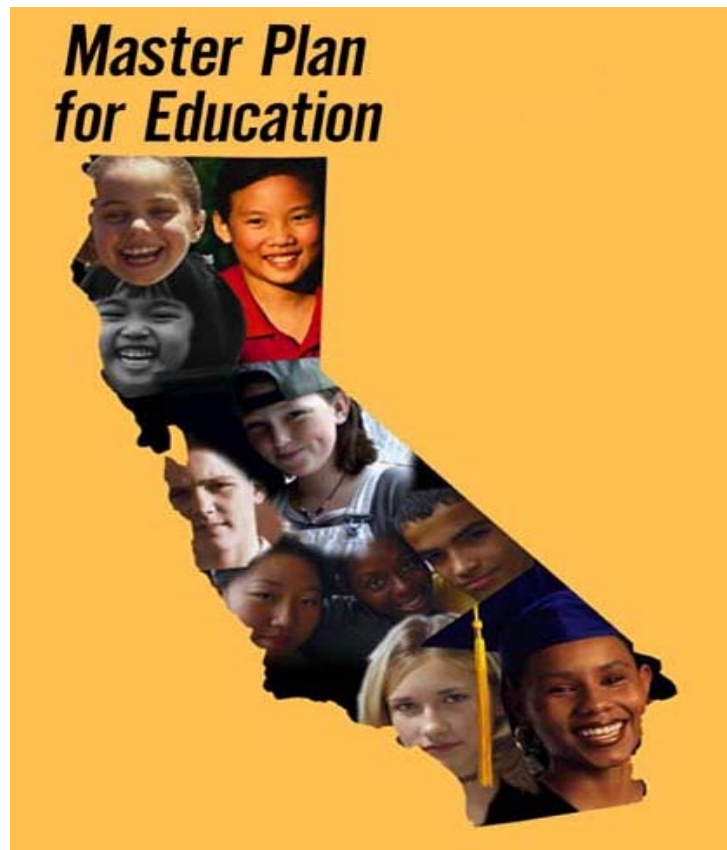


Joint Committee to Develop a Master  
Plan for Education – Kindergarten  
through University

# Student Learning Working Group *Final Report*



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# **A Coherent and Integrated System of High Quality and Equitable Education for California:**

## **Challenging Goals, Guaranteed Opportunities to Learn, Fair and Useful Assessment & Systemic Accountability**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Report of the Student Learning Working Group  
to the California Legislature's Joint Committee to Develop a Master Plan for  
Education—Kindergarten through University

Jeannie Oakes, UCLA, and Sonia Hernandez, Los Angeles Alliance, Co-chairs

February 2002

*California will develop and maintain a cohesive system of first-rate schools, colleges, and universities that prepares all students for transition to and success in the next level of education, the workforce, and general society, and that is responsive to the changing needs of the state and its people. (Resolution of the Joint Committee To Develop A Master Plan For Education—Kindergarten Through University, 2000)*

In 1960, California took a bold step by developing a master plan wherein every qualified and interested California resident was guaranteed tuition-free access to higher education. In 2000, the Legislature set an even more ambitious goal: Extend the reach and promise of the master plan by bringing the State's schools, colleges, and universities into a more cohesive, learner-focused system—from kindergarten, through all levels of the University experience, and beyond—that guarantees a quality education to all Californians.

A Master Plan that accomplishes this ambitious goal must make student learning the focal point of policy decisions about a host of complex issues, including standards, assessment, teacher education, college admissions policies, governance, funding streams and institutional turf issues, to name just a few. Only with a focus on learning can we create a system that enables all Californians to develop knowledge, understandings, skills and dispositions necessary to sustain a democratic society and a desired quality of life.

The sobering reality of California's education system is that too few schools can provide the conditions whereby the state can reasonably and fairly ask students to learn to the highest standards. However, if Californians embrace the learning goals we set forth in Recommendation 1 as promises to be kept rather than demands to be enforced, the education system can emerge from a surreal world in which resources are substantially out of line with needs and requirements. The learning goals we outline here must guide

new standards for educational resources, conditions, and opportunities. We must be vigilant that these goals are not adopted simply as obstacles that students must overcome.

The Student Learning Working Group (SLWG) offers ten sets of recommendations for how California's new Master Plan should restructure the State's schools and universities into a coherent, integrated K-university educational system that is equitable, well-resourced, and of the highest quality. These recommendations link to all of the elements of the education system that have been the focus of the six other Working Groups. The recommendations of the other groups, we believe, should be weighed in light of their contribution to achieving the goals we outline here.

In the more than 40 years since the first Master Plan, we have learned a great deal about the policies and practices our recommendations require. The task now is to develop the political will to act on what we know and to make the long-term investment that is required. This asks quite a lot of Californians. Yet, the imperative cannot be denied or misunderstood: California's public schools must provide *all* children with the learning experiences they require to develop the knowledge and problem solving abilities that are essential for productive and meaningful lives, work, and participation in democratic society.

**First Principles: California's PreK-University Master Plan must result in education policies that ensure quality and choice for all students, and enable equitable results.**

We recommend that the legislature set standards and ensure the resources, conditions and opportunities so that all PreK-12 students participate in a rich and comprehensive program of instruction and receive the learning supports that enable them to attain four fundamental learning goals: 1) oral proficiency and full literacy in two languages; 2) high level competency in mathematics; 3) deep knowledge in other academic areas; and 4) preparation for successful entry into four-year university, community college transfer programs, or community college vocational certificate programs, without the need for remedial or developmental courses.

We also recommend that the legislature accommodate the growing demand for a 4-year university education; guarantee equitable access to post-secondary education; ensure equitable patterns of post-secondary degree and certificate attainment; and increase the transfer rate of well-prepared community college students to CSU and UC. This emphasis on college readiness for all students, however, should not diminish state support for high quality career and technical programs at the community colleges that lead to occupational certificates, occupational associate degrees, and courses that prepare students to enter the job market with the competencies they will need to succeed. Additionally, the legislature must preserve an open educational system that allows Californians to enter and exit depending on need and provides multiple sources of learning and support for students at every level of education.

*For specifics, see pages 4-7*

## **Challenging Goals and Curriculum**

### **Recommendation 1: Set ambitious learning goals and provide all students a challenging K-12 and postsecondary curriculum.**

The State must ensure that all students have access to a K-12 curriculum comprised of the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary for college going (without the need for remediation), productive work, and active citizenship. As a part of this curriculum, all schools must offer academic programs and coursework that provide students a reasonable opportunity to seek admission to and succeed in any of California's public postsecondary institutions. Specifically, this means that all students must have the opportunity to take mathematics courses that include beginning algebra by 8<sup>th</sup> grade, a college readiness curriculum (currently the A-G course pattern) becomes the standard high school curriculum for all students, and this curriculum becomes the recommended preparation for community college, as well as four-year universities. The mandate for A-G should be accompanied by supports for high schools and public postsecondary schools who work together to develop a broad array of courses that meet the A-G requirements.

*For specific recommendations, see pages 8-12*

## **Guaranteed Opportunities to Learn**

### **Recommendation 2: Provide adequate and equitably distributed learning resources.**

Here, we defer for specific to the recommendations of the Finance and Facilities Working Group. However, we note with alarm the current patterns of funding that underlie in large part the current crisis of overcrowded and deteriorating facilities and the shortage of qualified teachers. Clearly, the state must increase its commitment, as well as overhaul the methods by which it generates and allocates resources for schooling. Whatever funding and facilities schemes are adopted, the State must provide the differential resources communities and students require in order to ensure high-quality education for all Californians, and to remedy the current shortages and conditions in facilities in the States' neediest communities.

### **Recommendation 3: Recruit, prepare, develop, and retain a high quality educational workforce.**

We defer to the Professional Development Working Group for the specifics of professional preparation matched to the content, pedagogy, and organizational demands of a coherent and integrated K-university system with the features described in 1-8. However, we also emphasize that our recommendations for challenging goals and curriculum can only be effective if they include or are accompanied by a guarantee that all students K-16 have ready access to teachers, administrators, and counselors who have high expectations for all students, as well as subject matter knowledge, understanding of student learning, and knowledge of the requirements their students will encounter at the next level of schooling. These school professionals, themselves, need time and learning

opportunities that enable them to provide these supports to students. Achieving the learning goals that are at the heart of this report will also require that the legislature fund the preparation and ongoing professional development of K-12 teachers in second languages.

**Recommendation 4: Establish a high-quality system of pre-kindergarten care and education that enables all students to enter school ready and able to learn.**

Here, the SLWG defers to the recommendations of the School Readiness Working Group. Whatever approach is taken to school readiness, the state must provide the differential resources and opportunities to communities and students to ensure equitable readiness for high-quality K-university schooling. Children must receive the rich pre-school experiences that have a profound influence on their later learning. Delivering these experiences opens crucial opportunities for public institutions to forge respectful and empowering partnerships with families from all segments of California. Moreover, in linguistically diverse California, school readiness must include promoting the development and maintenance of children's home languages in ways that both supplement and enhance learning English.

**Recommendation 5: Guarantee high quality learning conditions and opportunities for every student, PreK-University.**

The State must provide all students with the resources, instruction, and support necessary for achieving the competencies that standards and college admissions requirements demand. At a minimum, the State must enable local schools to provide every K-12 student with all of the following:

- A clear statement of the academic standards that both define what students are expected to know and do and what the system in turn will do for them at every level;
- Teachers who are credentialed in the subjects they teach; credentialed administrators; counselors and other staff who combine subject matter knowledge, high expectations and knowledge of requirements and expectations for success for their students;
- Accurate information about successful preparation for college eligibility and post-secondary options;
- A course of study that provides equitable access to a curriculum that integrates rigorous academic content with robust, viable career pathways;
- Appropriate, high quality learning materials and resources, including textbooks and technologies that engage students with the knowledge they are expected to learn;
- Suitable learning environments, including classrooms, facilities, and buildings;
- Fair and authentic diagnostic assessment at each grade level.

The legislature must provide necessary resources to enable low income, ELL, immigrant, and disabled students to participate fully in K-12 and post-secondary schooling, even if those exceed the resources provided to other students or other schools. Finally, as with K-12 schooling, community colleges and universities must insure that conditions are in place for all students to succeed.



*For specific recommendations, see pages 14-16*

**Recommendation 6: Provide flexible time and instruction that support learning and ensure successful transitions between schooling levels.**

Resources currently devoted to compensatory, remedial, and retention strategies should be shifted into flexible systems of time and learning support. The need that many students have for differential attention is normal, and a healthy education system addresses these needs routinely. However, this flexibility must not delay students' achievement or interfere with timely or successful transitions to the next schooling level. Intensive academic support, accompanied by additional resource investment will be needed to provide all students with the learning opportunities they require to master the curriculum at grade and/or age levels comparable to those of most of their peers. Most importantly, supplemental programs, K-university, must focus on having all students "keep up" rather than having to "catch up."

Learning support must include information and counseling regarding college requirements and student financial aid to all teachers, students and families, and provide families college-going "accountability" reports that document their student's progress toward college and careers. It also must include transparent and sustainable articulation and transfer processes that provide students with clear curriculum guidance about the transition between high schools and college and between two- and four-year colleges and universities, as well as support for "dual admissions" programs that support the transfer of community college students to CSU and UC. Finally, it includes responsibility and provides resources at the post-secondary level to assist increasing numbers of college students to keep up with their academic coursework and attain certificates and degrees.

*For specific recommendations, see pages 16-23*

**Fair and Useful Assessment**

**Recommendation 7: Develop an integrated and coherent assessment system that monitors programs as well as student learning and that guides the provision of additional learning support.**

The State must develop an integrated, coherent system of assessment that serves multiple purposes, avoids unnecessary cost and duplication, and supports the learning goals we want for students. This goal can best be realized in a system with several parts: (1) a state system of program assessment; (2) local systems for individual student assessment; and (3) a shared system of state and local assessment for graduation based on exhibitions of performance. The state's major role in assessment should be to assess programs and to monitor and report aggregate student performance. The state should charge local districts with developing their own assessment systems for providing information about and guiding instruction for individual students. The state should establish an Assessment Quality Assurance Panel to evaluate both state and local assessment systems (both the assessments used and the manner in which they are used). Graduation standards and performance-based methods by which

students demonstrate their competencies should be developed by the state, in consultation with experts from higher education and local school districts, as appointed by their respective academic senates, and with the participation of California’s diverse communities.

Reports of student performance should describe how many students actually perform particular kinds of tasks, rather than merely assigning a numerical score that has no substantive or accurate meaning to students, parents, teachers, or the public. They should also describe the programmatic context in which student outcomes are achieved.

An adequate assessment system requires a non-voluntary, longitudinal student data system that enables the State and schools to assess the contribution of the current year of schooling to students’ growth, as well as identify and examine the factors that promote access to high quality resources, opportunity to learn to high standards, and significantly increased achievement for all students at key transition points in the system.

*For specific recommendations, see pages 24-29*

## **Systemic Accountability and Review**

### **Recommendation 8: Establish a system of regularly reported indicators for accountability and improvement.**

The Student Learning Working Group calls for the construction and implementation of a vision of shared and systemic accountability—a two-way, mutual, and blameless vision of accountability that links learning outcomes to the conditions under which teachers teach and students learning. Shared, systemic accountability includes those things that the State and school districts do to *provide* high quality learning for all students as well as to *evaluate* school offerings and student performance. It focuses on the provision of high quality education to all students, and makes clear that the responsibility for learning must be shared by families, community organizations, businesses, and other Californians along with state agencies, school boards, administrators, teachers, and students.

This approach to accountability requires that the State develop, legislate and fund a comprehensive system of preK-16 educational indicators. These indicators must be constructed and reported in ways that reveal the character and distribution of learning conditions and outcomes for various groups of California students across and within school and systems. It requires that the K-12 Academic Performance Index (API) be expanded so that it includes indicators such as dropout rates, grade promotion, and other indicators of outcomes, in addition to multiple measures of student achievement. It also requires that the State create and report a K-12 “Opportunities for Teaching and Learning Index” (OTL) that parallels the API, and that, like the API, permits statewide school comparisons. Finally, it requires system indicators that ensure accountability at all levels of the system.

The legislature should develop a long-term strategic plan for the meaningful use of accountability data and indicators by state and local policymakers, educators, and all

Californians to determine the impact of programs and interventions designed to improve learning conditions and outcomes and for remedying inadequacies.

The State must provide incentives for K-12 schools to create high quality programs and to open their doors to the students who are in the greatest educational need. Rewards for such schools should be directed at supporting the spread of these educational innovations to as many other schools as possible. Strategies for intervening in K-12 schools that are not serving all students well should support schools' efforts to build their organizational capacity, develop high-quality programs and support student learning.

Finally, we recommend that the legislature bring post-secondary education into an integrated accountability system by requiring public post-secondary institutions to develop a commonly used longitudinal data base that enables them to report a set of accountability indicators that monitor quality and equity in access and attainment. We also recommend that public post-secondary institutions engage in a process of examining and making recommendations about whether and how the state's educational system could benefit from a series of indicators of post-secondary students' learning, and explore the technology and the cultural and political implications of such a system.

*For specific recommendations, see pages 30-36*

#### **Recommendation 9: Ensure ongoing, inter-segmental coordination and review**

The Governance Working Group has been given the responsibility for recommending the specifics of how a coherent and integrated K-16 educational system should be governed. However, we argue strongly that whatever governance strategy is adopted, inter-segmental collaboration between educational professionals at various levels--Pre K-12 through University -- is essential, particularly with respect to issues of alignment and coordination in the areas of curricula, standards, assessment, admissions, and placement.. Specifically, we recommend a body comprised of both K-12 and university faculty senate representatives be convened to address issues of alignment and coordination in the areas of curricula, assessment, admissions, and placement.

*For specific recommendations, see pages 37-38*

### **An Immediate Intervention to Increase Access**

#### **Recommendation 10: Increase access to the University of California for students in most educationally disadvantaged schools.**

We add to the recommendations above a significant, but short-term intervention that will demonstrate the state's commitment to educate all Californians well and open long-shut doors of opportunity to under-served students. Specifically, the University of California should use to the fullest extent the Master Plan's and University's Admissions by Exception policy (that allows for 6% of admitted students to be selected from those not meeting the basic eligibility criteria of the University) to admit ineligible students from

educationally disadvantaged schools who display academic promise, extraordinary talent, and leadership potential. To accompany this use of Admissions by Exception, the University must ensure that its on-campus academic support programs are sufficient to enable these students to succeed.

We believe that this recommendation can and should be implemented immediately in order to engage the University of California directly in addressing the problems of the widespread under-preparation of California's K-12 students. This intervention falls well within the UC mission. Clearly, no public problem is more salient and challenging than increasing educational quality and opportunity in our diverse state.

# **A Coherent and Integrated System of High-Quality and Equitable Education for California:**

## **Challenging Goals, Guaranteed Opportunities to Learn, Fair and Useful Assessment, & Systemic Accountability**

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to the California Legislature's Joint Committee to Develop a Master Plan for  
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*California will develop and maintain a cohesive system of first-rate schools, colleges, and universities that prepares all students for transition to and success in the next level of education, the workforce, and general society, and that is responsive to the changing needs of the state and its people. (Resolution of the Joint Committee to Develop A Master Plan for Education—Kindergarten through University, 2000)*

### **Introduction**

In 1960, California took a bold step by developing a master plan wherein every qualified and interested California resident was guaranteed tuition-free access to higher education. The Master Plan for Higher Education has been reviewed each decade since 1960 and, despite changes in California's economic and demographic circumstances, the original Master Plan has remained remarkably intact. In 1973, however, the Legislature augmented the state's master plan with student diversity goals to foster a higher education community that was representative of the demographics of the state and of high school graduates. In 2000, the Legislature set an even more ambitious goal: Extend the reach and promise of the master plan by bringing the state's schools, colleges, and universities into a more cohesive, learner-focused system—from kindergarten, through all levels of the University experience, and beyond—that guarantees a quality education to all Californians.

California schools and universities must prepare a student population that is increasingly large, increasingly diverse, and increasingly low-income. Without high-quality<sup>1</sup> education, it is doubtful that California students can thrive, compete, and contribute in an economy more and more driven by technological work, international markets,

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A

geopolitical tensions, and social complexity. Without a well-educated citizenry, the state's economic and civic future will be far less than what it could and should be.

Over the past two decades, legislators and educators have worked hard to update tried-and-true approaches to education in response to new demands that include the increasing diversity of our population, technological advances, workforce changes, global competition, and the need for an active and engaged body politic. The legislature's next logical step is to bring the Pre-K, K-12 and postsecondary levels together into a cohesive system with quality guarantees at all levels. Such a step will require far more than a refinement of the tried and true. It will require the legislature's firm commitment to a coherent set of policies that challenge fundamentally the educational status quo.

A Master Plan that accomplishes this ambitious goal must make student learning the focal point of policy decisions about a host of complex issues, including standards, assessment, teacher education, college admissions policies, governance, funding streams and institutional turf issues, to name just a few. Only with a focus on learning can we create a system that enables all Californians to develop knowledge, understandings, skills and dispositions necessary to sustain a democratic society and a desired quality of life. In what follows we lay out a set of learning goals for all students as the focus of the state's Master Plan and education policymaking.

Importantly, the power of the 1960 Master Plan was its framing of the state's educational promises to Californians and the State's will to deliver on those promises. Similarly, the challenging learning goals we recommend are to be seen as educational promises to Californians, not educational burdens to be borne by their children. California's record is clear: so long as the State has kept its educational promises, its students have met the state's highest hopes for their learning; when and where California's will and educational infrastructure have slackened, students' performance and opportunities have similarly fallen.

The sobering reality of California's education system is that too many of the state's schools can neither provide nor promise the conditions whereby the State can reasonably and fairly ask students to learn to the highest standards. In 2002, California ranked 46<sup>th</sup> among states in the adequacy of educational resources it provides, earning the state a grade of "F" on *Education Week's* annual report card of educational quality. The decades-long under-commitment of resources has left the system's capacity unable to provide students high-quality opportunities to learn. This is perhaps most dramatically evidenced in the state's inadequate and unevenly distributed supply of qualified teachers. If Californians embrace the learning goals we set forth—embrace as promises to be kept rather than demands to be enforced—the education system can emerge from a surreal world in which resources are largely out of line with needs and requirements. The goals we outline here must guide new standards for educational resources, conditions, and opportunities. We must be vigilant that these goals are not adopted simply as obstacles that students must overcome.

The Student Learning Working Group (SLWG) offers ten sets of recommendations for how California's new Master Plan should restructure the state's schools and universities into a coherent, integrated PreK-University educational system that is equitable, well-resourced, and of the highest quality. These recommendations will require changes in many aspects of current school operations, including school structures, how staff and time are allocated, teaching strategies, and the ways in which adults and students are organized for instruction. Reforms like these cannot be accomplished by mandate. They require investments in the capacity of schools, colleges and universities to reflect upon and analyze their practices and to develop alternatives that can transform curriculum, teaching, and assessment.

Our proposals must be linked to all of the elements of the education system that have been the focus of the six other Working Groups. To create an educational system that makes student learning the highest priority, we recommend that the recommendations of the other groups be aligned with the learning recommendations we outline below. Many of the recommendations will require legislative action. Hence, not all of the recommendations will or can be implemented immediately. For these recommendations to be effectively implemented, it will require a long-term plan of the phasing in of strategic investments in the schools, colleges and universities.

In the more than 40 years since the first Master Plan, we have learned a great deal about the policies, practices, and resources our recommendations require. The task now is to develop the political will to act on what we know and to make the long-term investment that is required. This asks quite a lot of Californians—"sacrifice" is not too strong a word. Yet, the imperative cannot be denied or misunderstood: California's public schools must provide all children with the educational experiences they require to develop the knowledge and problem solving abilities that are essential for productive and meaningful lives, work, and participation in democratic society.

**First Principles: California's PreK-12-University Master Plan must ensure educational quality and choice for all students, and enable equitable results<sup>2</sup>**

A high-quality education in California builds upon the state's richness born of diverse people, cultures, and viewpoints. It is an education that prepares all of its students for civic responsibilities and productive work, provides them with a fair and meaningful opportunity to enter and succeed in postsecondary education, and encourages lifelong learning. It recognizes that "ready for college" and "ready for work" are not mutually exclusive, and that skills and knowledge needed by high school graduates who enter the workforce are the same as those needed by graduates who go directly to college. A student who is adequately and appropriately prepared for either choice should be prepared for both, as well as for participation as a citizen in a diverse democracy. The decision about whether to go to college (and what type of college) or directly to work must be the student's. Having said that students should be able to make their own educational choices, Californians must recognize that many choices are constrained by lack of information, preparation, opportunity, encouragement, and so on. Adequate preparation for choice making means eliminating these and other constraints. Students must not be constrained in their academic or career choices due to factors associated with their race, ethnicity, gender, language status, social class, or neighborhood.

California's constitution guarantees a free, public education to all of the state's young people. Therefore, it is the State's responsibility to enact a set of educational goals that accomplish the following:

- ◆ ensure the necessary resources, equal educational opportunities, and learning experiences
- ◆ require a coherent curriculum
- ◆ expect and enable all schools to be staffed by qualified professionals
- ◆ hold each level of the education system accountable to the state's citizens, families, and students.

State policies must ensure that all students have the learning conditions and opportunities they need to complete secondary school prepared for and able to choose among a wide range of postsecondary education and career options. While decisions about what constitutes a high-quality education is not a state function alone, the State should identify core outcomes for all students, regardless of background or ability or needs.

**Learning Goals**

→ **California's Legislature must adopt a Master Plan that sets goals and ensures the resources, conditions, and opportunities so that all PreK-12 students**

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<sup>2</sup> By equitable we mean that disparities in educational quality, accomplishment, or choices can no longer be predicted by a student's race, ethnicity, gender, economic status, age, disabling condition, or other identifiable group characteristics.



**participate in a rich and comprehensive program of instruction and receive the learning supports that enable them to attain:**

- 1. Mastery of oral and written expression in two languages;**
- 2. Mathematical competency, including algebraic thinking and fluency with formal representations of mathematical knowledge;**
- 3. Acquisition of deep content knowledge; and**
- 4. Preparation for successful entry into four-year university, community college transfer programs, or community college vocational certificate programs, without the need for remedial or developmental courses.**

The Student Learning Working Group recommends the above four learning goals, expecting the education system to elaborate and enact them in ways that are consistent with the recommendations in the remainder of this report. We place particular emphasis on numeracy and literacy as foundational skills, and as such, the State must assure that all students can meet these literacy and numeracy standards. We call for all students to attain oral and written proficiency in two languages. This goal is closely associated with individuals' cultural enrichment, the competencies required of citizens in a culturally diverse state and increasingly global society, and California's economic competitiveness. We realize that reaching this goal will require developing a teacher workforce with knowledge and skills in multiple languages. Yet, we view this recommendation as building on an unmatched opportunity, given the state's linguistic diversity. Public opinion polls make clear the widespread support for students learning a second language, particularly in view of the increasingly global society and economy. Given the wealth of language resources among California's population, the state is uniquely poised to adopt this challenging, but critically important goal. Finally, we emphasize acquisition of deep knowledge in essential school subjects. This goal reflects the clear need for all students to learn principles on which critical and creative thinking are based.

The state's current content standards for K-12 are a first step toward meeting this state obligation (although they require modification to address our goal of proficiency in two languages). However, without carefully matching standards for content and student performance to standards for the resources and opportunities needed to meet them, the state risks presenting its students with little more than a list of unachievable goals. To ensure a realistic matching of goals and resources, the assessment of student achievement must be accompanied by the equally rigorous monitoring of resources and opportunities. Further, timely learning supports at the moment when students require them should replace the remedial programs and retention policies that are triggered by students' failure. These latter practices remove students from high-achievement trajectories and have been shown repeatedly to retard students' progress and achievement rather than enhance it.<sup>3</sup> Further, there are realistic, practical alternatives to remediation and retention that do not disadvantage students.

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<sup>3</sup> Dozens of studies have found that retaining students actually contributes to greater academic failure, higher levels of dropping out, and greater behavioral difficulties rather than to success in school. Students who are held back actually do worse in the long run than comparable students who are promoted, in part perhaps because they do not receive better or

## **Postsecondary Goals**

- **Accommodate the growing demand for a 4-year university education.**
- **Guarantee equitable access to postsecondary education.**
- **Ensure equitable patterns of postsecondary degree and certificate attainment, and provide the increased advisement and learning supports for students who need and seek it to achieve this goal.<sup>4</sup>**

The original Master Plan promised a tuition-free, public postsecondary education to every Californian. We strongly recommend that the new Master Plan renew that promise. The original plan designated the top third of high school graduates as eligible for California State University (CSU) admission and the top 12.5% as eligible for University of California (UC) admission, and it guaranteed spaces in the state's system of community colleges for all adults in the state. The growing demand for college-educated workers, the expanding desire among young people for a college education, and the increasing diversity of the state all suggest that the state must increase the capacity of higher education programs to accommodate both the large wave of students expected in the next decade and for additional students that may show up as a result of these newer needs. It also must ensure equitable access. Further, it must be assumed, as a natural and logical consequence of the State's increased attention to providing a high-quality education to all of its students, that the demand for higher education and the number of qualified applicants will grow in larger proportion than the increasing number of students in the state.

Whatever the proportion and absolute numbers of California students opting for postsecondary education, there is a key question that Californians must ask to judge the quality of the state's PreK-University educational system: Does the percentage of students who successfully gain admission and who complete degrees and certificate programs in California's community colleges, CSUs, UCs, and other public postsecondary programs—represent the diversity of the state? Each segment of the state's postsecondary system should be examined in light of this question.

## **Lifelong Learning Goals**

- **Preserve the educational system as an open system that allows Californians to enter and exit depending on need and provide multiple sources of learning and support for students at every level of education.**

For many individuals, the social trend and personal requirement to pursue multiple careers in one's life makes adaptability in employment as important as any initial set of career skills, certification, or degrees. In brief, California's schools cannot depend on a single "pipeline" that leads from early school successes through the university, with students opting out at various points along the way. California's education system must

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more appropriate teaching when they are retained, and in part because they give up on themselves as learners.

<sup>4</sup> See Recommendation 6 for a discussion of what we mean by support.

offer multiple entry and re-entry points appropriate to individual and civic needs and available throughout adults' lives.

Additionally, in many California communities, particularly low-income neighborhoods of color, community institutions provide important educational experiences, support the public schools, and assist families in making the transitions critical for school, college, and university success. Therefore, implementing effective education policies cannot exclusively be dependent on the schools. The state legislature will need to provide incentives to create and support formal partnerships between families, schools, youth development organizations, local government, and the full array of social institutions and organizations that contribute to the personal and academic development of young people.

The recommendations that follow detail how the state can and should set challenging goals and curriculum, guarantee opportunities to learn, ensure fair and useful assessment, and establish systemic processes of accountability and review. We also recommend a short-term intervention to increase the access to the University of California for student in the state's most disadvantaged schools.

## **Challenging Goals and Curriculum for All Students**

### **Recommendation 1:**

**Set ambitious learning goals and provide all students a challenging K-12 curriculum, including preparation for postsecondary schooling.**

The State must ensure that all students have access to a K-12 curriculum comprised of the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary for successful college-going, productive work, and active citizenship. As a part of this curriculum, all schools must offer academic programs and coursework that provide all students an equitable opportunity to seek admission to and succeed in any of California's public postsecondary institutions. To ensure this high-quality curriculum for all students we recommend the following:

*Recommendation 1.1: The State must ensure that all schools provide all students with curriculum and coursework that include the knowledge, skills, and experiences that enable them to attain the following learning goals:*

- *Mastery of oral and written expression in at least one language and the foundation established for mastery of a second language by the end of elementary school; mastery of oral proficiency and full literacy in two languages; by the end of secondary school;*
- *Mastery of basic numerical operations and fluency with basic arithmetic representations by the end of elementary school; mastery of algebraic thinking and problem solving and fluency with formal representations of mathematical knowledge, by the end of secondary school;*
- *Acquisition of deep content knowledge in the sciences, social studies, arts, and technology;*
- *Preparation for successful entry into 4-year university, community college transfer programs, or community college vocational certificate programs, without the need for remedial or developmental courses.*

The necessary academic competencies are represented in California policy in the content standards. These standards form the basis of an aligned system of curriculum, materials, instruction, and assessments for each level of the educational system. However, the current standards and requirements are not a complete expression of what California students should know and be able to do. The standards should recognize the congruity of academic achievement, workforce preparation, and the knowledge and skills needed for democratic participation in a diverse society. Among many needed refinements to standards and course requirements, we recommend the immediate addition of oral and written proficiency in a second language. California is the nation's most linguistically rich state. At a time when global knowledge, skill, and understanding are at a premium, our multilingualism is an asset that must be developed. The Master Plan should

recognize the State's widespread bilingualism (in multiple languages) and embrace it as a 21<sup>st</sup> century educational and social resource.<sup>5</sup>

*Recommendation 1.2: Provide all students the opportunity to take mathematics courses that include beginning algebra by 8<sup>th</sup> grade.*

While many argue that algebra should be the required course at grade 8, there are several reasons for not locking all students' mathematics learning into that particular configuration at this time. First, students who have not had the advantage of a newly aligned curriculum will need more time. Second, many good integrated math programs do not have a "course" in algebra. Third, not all students are ready to learn traditional approaches to algebra by 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Fourth, currently many middle school math teachers are unprepared to teach algebra to all of their students. Finally, many states including California have succeeded in getting virtually all students through algebra and geometry by allowing what was a one-year course to become a two-year course for those students who need more time. California would be well advised to create flexible, realistic, and well-supported approaches to mathematics learning.

*Recommendation 1.3: Establish an academically rigorous course pattern (currently the A-G course pattern that is required for CSU and UC eligibility) as the standard curriculum for every high school student, and provide the learning support that enables students to successfully complete this college readiness curriculum. Students not wishing to participate in this rigorous curriculum should, with the proper counseling, be allowed to "opt out" of this pattern of courses. In such cases, students must follow a personalized learning plan that ensures basic academic competencies.*

After years of negotiation, CSU and UC now agree on a desirable college/university preparatory pattern of high school course taking, both in terms of overall requirements and in judgments about whether offerings at particular high schools meet the A-G standards. This coursework pattern requires a broad and rigorous set of experiences in the humanities, sciences, and the arts, as well as providing the basis for college-level work and for participation in the workforce and civic affairs. This curriculum should be supplemented with learning supports that enable all students to complete the course pattern required for college admission and for them to succeed in non-remedial college-level courses.<sup>6</sup>

Three caveats are essential here, two of which are explored further below. First, neither the CSU nor the UC accepts the current A-G requirements as ideal, and scholars in both systems faced many frustrating hours selecting from all that constitutes a high-quality education the particulars that fit into a single set of requirements. Ongoing

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<sup>5</sup> As noted below and in Recommendation 8, we also recommend that, to keep the state's content standards current with the changing context, the State establish an ongoing, intersegmental process of review and revision of this curriculum to ensure its quality and relevance to students and to the needs of California.

<sup>6</sup> We refer here specifically to the competencies agreed upon by the three postsecondary segments in mathematics, and to similar competencies in other academic fields that are under review or in development.

reconsideration of the college preparatory curriculum is essential. Second, in no way is this recommendation meant to undermine the “open admissions” policies of California’s community colleges that make real the State’s promise of access to postsecondary education for all Californians.

Most critical, however, is the caveat noted at the outset of this report. California is currently in no position to require that all students complete the college preparatory course pattern as a condition for promotion from one grade to the next or for graduation from high school. Today, most California high schools have neither the resources nor the teaching capacity to enable all students to successfully participate in the A-G course pattern.

*Recommendation 1.4: Encourage the university and high schools to develop and provide to all students multiple pathways for successfully completing the college preparatory curriculum.*

Traditionally, “multiple pathways” through high school has meant differentiated coursework leading some students to be qualified for college attendance and others not to be qualified. In contrast, we recommend that multiple pathways refer to alternative ways to successfully complete the A-G course pattern. At its simplest, this is a call for far greater flexibility in pedagogy and course content than now exists. This recommendation for added flexibility is not a call to relax the intellectual rigor of the courses or to step outside the California Standards. It is consistent with what some outstanding schools try to do, and what is being recognized as optimal by many schools and departments within the CSU and UC. The implementation of this recommendation should be phased in over time with more resources going to those high schools that need them the most.

The mandate for A-G should be accompanied with incentives for creative curriculum work in the high school, in collaboration with public postsecondary institutions. The State must commit the resources to ensure high quality courses, qualified teachers, and adequate materials in every high school. The phasing in of these alternatives should begin with the most “in need” schools.

If California schools hold their career preparation programs to both the A-G requirements and the highest workforce standards, students will graduate ready for rapid career advancement through on-the-job experience, workplace apprenticeships, and postsecondary opportunities. From this perspective, the knowledge and skills in college preparatory academic courses and courses leading more directly to the workplace will overlap considerably in their intellectual rigor.

Most important, this recommendation will provide more equitable and higher quality learning opportunities to more students, hence, increasing the chances for more students to complete high school successfully. If the conditions for quality learning (as specified in Recommendation 5) are phased in strategically, more and more students will receive the quality education they have a right to expect in their schools.

*Recommendation 1.5: Establish the A-G course pattern as that which prepares students for community college as well as for the state’s four-year postsecondary institutions.*

Because the A-G pattern of coursework is necessary to prepare broadly for academic and workforce success, the community college system should add its voice to promoting this rigorous, standards-based curriculum. What CSU and UC require, the community colleges should strongly recommend. Of the three higher education components of the state's education system—community college, CSU and UC—the community colleges serve students who have the widest breadth of college preparedness and the broadest range of career aspirations. This system is an extremely important nexus for providing not only continuing students but *all* citizens equitable access, *at all times*, to quality postsecondary learning and professional training. Even a summary of this breadth and range is too extensive to offer here; suffice it to say that the community colleges welcome students who may lack significant K-12 coursework and accomplishments and prepare these same students for high level workplace and professional careers. On the other hand, the community colleges serve many students who may enter as well prepared as their CSU and UC peers.

The guiding assumption should be that the A-G requirements will come to represent something more than a college preparatory curriculum, but, as well, the State of California's goal for what constitutes the necessary education for all its K-12 students. Whether community college students intend to transfer to the university in pursuit of the baccalaureate degree or obtain advanced workforce training, the community colleges' promotion of and engagement with the A-G requirements would send a powerful single message from the higher education community about what it takes to be ready for post-high school training.

This recommendation is compatible with the "open admissions" policy of the community colleges, which should be maintained. It retains emphasis on the importance of immediate workforce training at the same time that it includes students who do not successfully complete the core A-G coursework. It also addresses the all too common misconception that students not intending to go right from high school to a university have the option of selecting a less academically rigorous program of study in high school. This widespread phenomenon contributes to low expectations for many students and a multi-track educational system that creates significant deterrents to postsecondary certificate, degree, and transfer success.

*Recommendation 1.6: Strengthen the academic programs at the community college that prepare students to transfer to CSU and UC.*

The Master Plan provides both distinct and overlapping missions for the University of California, the California State University and the California Community Colleges. While the California Community Colleges serve broadly the educational, workforce, and community service needs of California, each system plays a critical role in providing baccalaureate education. At the heart of the mutual goals of the three systems is the successful completion of the baccalaureate at the California State University and University of California by students who have been placed on that road to success by their work at the community colleges. To realize this goal, high-quality and well-articulated general education requirements and agreements about the courses that satisfy

lower division requirements for majors must be in place between the community college and all public universities.

*Recommendation 1.7: Retain high-quality career and technical programs at the community colleges that lead to occupational certificates, occupational associate degrees, and what could be called customized curricula—a collection of courses chosen by a student based on knowledge of specific job requirements—that prepare students to enter the job market with a set of competencies they will need to succeed.*

The increased demand for four-year college and university education should not diminish the state's commitment to high-quality vocational preparation, certification programs, citizenship and ELL (English Language Learning) functions, etc. of the community colleges—all of which play an essential role in adult learning, immigrant transition, and community building. The opportunity for Californians to continually return to school to pursue relevant education for vocations and avocations is extremely important in a state where the accelerating pace of change in careers can both enhance and disrupt individuals' lives as well as state and local prosperity. Further, we must recognize in our policies that many students do not complete high school, do not initially choose postsecondary education, or may not succeed in their initial academic attempts, but they often find great success when continued or advanced education has more relevance as a result of their work perspective. Additionally, less than a generation ago, "over 65" was the single demographic category used to represent what might be called "post-career" (or, perhaps, "old") adults. Today, demographers recognize aging Americans as a complex and diverse group with extended working lives and educational needs.

Enacting and adequately funding all of the recommendations in this report are necessary preconditions and accompaniments to setting ambitious learning goals, including college preparation for all, and challenging curriculum for all students. The legislature must develop a plan for phasing in the resources equitably across all of the recommendations to make this first recommendation a reality.



## **Guaranteed Opportunities to Learn**

### **Recommendation 2:**

**Provide adequate and equitably distributed resources.**

Here, we defer for the specifics to recommendations of the Finance and Facilities Working Group. However, we note with alarm the current inadequacies in the state's resources that underlie in large part the current crisis of overcrowded and deteriorating facilities and the shortage of qualified teachers. Clearly, the State must increase its commitment, as well as overhauling the methods by which it generates and allocates resources for schooling. Also of critical importance, whatever funding and facilities schemes are adopted, the State must provide the differential resources communities and students require in order to ensure high-quality education for all Californians, and to remedy the current shortages and conditions in facilities in the states' neediest communities.

### **Recommendation 3:**

**Establish a high-quality system of Pre-Kindergarten care and education that enables all students to enter school ready and able to learn.**

Here, the SLWG defers to the recommendations of the School Readiness Working Group. Whatever approach is taken to school readiness, the legislature must provide the differential resources and opportunities to communities and students to ensure equitable readiness for high-quality PreK-University schooling. Children must receive the rich pre-school experiences that have a profound influence on their later learning. Delivering these experiences opens crucial opportunities for public institutions to forge respectful and empowering partnerships with families from all segments of California. Moreover, in linguistically diverse California, school readiness must include promoting the development and maintenance of children's home languages in ways that both supplement and enhance their learning of English.

### **Recommendation 4:**

**Recruit, prepare, develop, and retain a high-quality educational workforce.**

We defer to the Professional Development Working Group for the specifics of professional preparation matched to the content, pedagogy, and organizational demands of a coherent and integrated PreK-University system with the features described in 1-8. However, we also emphasize that the recommendations above can only be effective if these recommendations include or are accompanied by the following:

- Guarantee that all students PreK-16 have ready access to teachers and administrators and regularly work with counselors who combine subject matter knowledge, understanding of student learning, and high expectations for all students with

knowledge of the requirements their students will encounter at the next level of schooling.

- Ensure that the state's K-12 teachers meet the state's newly adopted teaching standards, and are prepared to assist students to meet the state content standards and college preparation requirements.
- Fund the preparation and ongoing professional development of K-12 teachers in second languages in order for them to enable students to meet the oral fluency and literacy goals advanced in Recommendation 1 (above).
- Create specific competencies regarding college preparation, student financial aid, and success in college that all teachers as well as counselors are required to meet.
- Guarantee funding and time for teachers, working in collaboration, to develop standards-based lessons and assessments at school sites and across-sites.
- Establish ongoing long-term professional development programs as an integral part of educators' work that enable them to develop their knowledge and teaching skills.
- Establish partnerships between the universities, colleges, districts and teacher unions to support teachers', counselors', and administrators' development.

#### **Recommendation 5:**

#### **Guarantee high-quality learning conditions and opportunities for every student.**

California's requirement of compulsory education for all children in the state must be viewed as a compact or contract between the State and the student/parents, complete with obligations, duties, responsibilities, and rights. Most important, every K-12 student in California has a fundamental constitutional right to an adequate, state provided education. Therefore, the State must provide all students with the resources, instruction, and support necessary for achieving the competencies that the standards and college admissions requirements demand.

While all students have a right to the same educational basics, they may require significantly different opportunities and resources to accomplish those basics. Ensuring equality of opportunity requires schools to respond appropriately to differences among learners. Groups for whom access, continuing participation, and success are the most problematic include students who are immigrants or the children of immigrants, low-income students, and English language learners. These students and others have the right to the resources and conditions that foster their achievement of the competencies expected in standards-based school programs and college admissions requirements, even if they require additional resources, opportunities, and support.

As noted throughout this report, the Master Plan must embody the State's guarantee that all students have the resources, instruction, and support necessary for achieving the competencies that standards and college admissions requirements demand. Therefore, an accounting of whether or not the education system provides all of the following must be

an integral part of the state's comprehensive accountability system. This information will enable parents and students, school officials, and policymakers to assess the education system's adequacy and target areas of greatest need for resources, development, and reform. As we describe in more detail in Recommendation 7, the state must create and report an "Opportunities for Learning Index" (OPI) that parallels the Academic Performance Index (API). This index will report students' access to opportunities, and, like the API, will permit statewide school comparisons, comparisons with high-and average-performing schools, and comparisons to prototypical schools that serve as desirable models of the goals every school is expected to achieve.

*Recommendation 5.1: The legislature must enact legislation that ensures, at a minimum, that local schools provide every K-12 student:*

- *A clear statement of the academic standards that both define what students are expected to know and do and what the system in turn will do for them at every level;*
- *Certified teachers, credentialed in the subjects they teach; certified administrators, counselors and other staff who combine subject matter knowledge, high expectations and knowledge of requirements and expectations for success for their students at the next level, as specified in Appendix C and in Recommendation 9;*
- *Accurate information about successful preparation for college eligibility; postsecondary options; and post-high school success;*
- *A course of study that provides equitable access to the curriculum specified in Recommendation 3—one that integrates rigorous academic content with robust, viable career pathways;*
- *Appropriate, high-quality learning materials and resources, including textbooks and technologies that engage students with the knowledge they are expected to learn and detailed in the standards, as specified in Appendix D;*
- *Suitable learning environments, including classrooms, facilities, and buildings as specified in Appendix E;*
- *Fair and authentic diagnostic assessment at each grade level. The three-fold purpose of the assessment system must be to 1) support student learning, 2) inform the provision of supplementary educational services, and 3) provide essential data for the accountability frameworks. The nature of this assessment is more fully described in Recommendation 6.*

*Recommendation 5.2: The State legislature must provide necessary resources to enable low-income, English Language Learning (ELL), immigrant, and disabled students to participate fully in K-12 and postsecondary schooling, even if those exceed the resources provided to other students or other schools.*

- *Fund and staff effective supplemental learning supports that enable students to succeed in the common, standards-based curriculum;*
- *Fund and staff the additional time that is needed to achieve academic success. This may include an extended instructional day or academic year, intense summer institutes, an additional year of high school, etc.;*

- *Support and monitor the development of appropriate academic assessment policies and practices for students whose first language is not English;*
- *Require that schools provide students and parents with the full range of linguistically and culturally appropriate information regarding successful participation in higher education, including academic, financial, and residency requirements. This includes providing families with timely, ongoing assistance in acquiring public and private financial support for higher education.*

**Recommendation 5.3:** *As with K-12 schooling, community colleges and universities must insure that conditions are in place for all students to succeed. These conditions include, as a minimum:*

- *A clear statement of the academic standards that must be met for degree attainment, transfer from a community college to a four-year institution, or certificate of completion;*
- *Qualified faculty who combine subject matter knowledge, high expectations and knowledge of requirements and expectations for success for their students;*
- *A course of study that provides rigorous academic content and enables robust, viable career options;*
- *Suitable learning environments;*
- *Fair and authentic diagnostic assessment;*
- *Effective learning support for low-income, and immigrant students, English language learners and students with disabilities who need these supports.*

### **Recommendation 6:**

**Provide flexible time and instruction that support learning and insure successful transitions between schooling levels.**

Although the K-12 curriculum and basic conditions for learning should be common for all students, the time and support required for all students to master the curriculum should be flexible. The current system for delivering education provides small, hourly funding for before- and/or after- school tutoring, but basically assumes that students at each grade will achieve a prescribed set of standards within a set amount of instructional time. This is contrary to reality. Students learn in a variety of ways, and success for *all* students requires new ways to structure time and deliver instruction.

Resources currently devoted to compensatory, remedial, and retention strategies should be shifted into flexible systems of time and learning supports.<sup>7</sup> The need that many students have for differential attention is normal, and a healthy education system

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<sup>7</sup> See Appendix F for the California Department of Education's definition of learning support. Our emphasis here is on the provision of additional instructional time, rather than reducing the barriers to learning, although we do not deny the value of the latter.

addresses these needs routinely. However, this flexibility must not delay students' achievement or interfere with timely or successful transitions to the next schooling level. Intensive academic support, accompanied by additional resource investment will be needed to provide all students with the learning opportunities they require to master the curriculum at grade and/or age levels comparable to those of most of their peers. Most importantly, supplemental programs, PreK-University, must focus on having *all* students “keep up” rather than having to “catch up.” We recognize that the interventions we recommend below will be costly. We also accept the fact that there will need to be a plan to phase in the necessary support and intervention systems. We want to reiterate that it is the state legislature's responsibility to develop a rational, sequenced educational investment plan with appropriate benchmarks. Without a plan and without appropriate benchmarks there will be no way of knowing how successfully we are progressing toward reaching the goals let alone how well we are implementing the plan that is developed and adopted. We would remind the legislature that the most expensive intervention is retention.

Support should be available for meeting student learning needs at every grade level. However, we describe below some of the critical PreK-16 transitions where additional support must be focused.

Pre-K to grades 1-3. It is a truism that children begin their lives with endless possibilities. They enter school enthusiastic, motivated and expecting to succeed. However, many students, especially in low-income neighborhoods, enter a disjointed education system that is ill equipped to meet their needs. From their earliest years they encounter poor facilities, overcrowded classrooms, and non-credentialed or inexperienced teachers.

Students who struggle in the first grade quickly become unmotivated and do not participate in the very activities that they need most. These children begin a pattern of continued academic frustration that continues throughout their education. After the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, academic achievement levels appear to remain remarkably stable throughout the school years. If students are not at grade level in reading and math by the third grade the trend continues throughout their education.

There are successful instructional programs that train teachers to work with a wide range of learner needs and these programs should be implemented throughout the early elementary years so *all* students can become successful learners. These programs should include diagnostic assessment tools that enable teachers, students, and parents to monitor learning over time in different skill areas and contexts, in order to address learners' needs before they become barriers to student success.

However, simply putting a “program” in place can mean little—even with well-trained teachers—if the overall school resources are so strained that they require students to be “rushed through” the program; that is, “covering” the material becomes more important than learning it. Successful programs work best when they are “institutionalized” or “standardized” as part of ongoing instruction.

From the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade and throughout the upper elementary years. Educators have created a benchmark that students should read at grade level by the time they reach 4<sup>th</sup> grade. The National Assessment of Educational Progress, however, reports that less than one-third of the nation's 4<sup>th</sup> graders are proficient in reading. When students fall behind in the first three grades, schools often hold them back. In some inner city schools, as many as one-fourth of the primary children repeat a grade. Research on grade retention consistently finds that student attitudes often worsen and skills do not improve. In addition, struggling students are often assigned to the least prepared and most inexperienced teachers. The legislature should develop, enact, and fund a plan for early intervention for struggling students to ensure that they read at grade level by the fourth grade. For students who are struggling with literacy by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, schools should:

- Conduct a careful evaluation of the instruction they have received;
- Evaluate whether there are particular unmet learning needs that require interventions by specialists or special materials or programs;
- Adapt teaching and learning strategies for students with language learning needs or learning disabilities and enable them to be taught by specialists using strategies and materials suited to their needs, with additional time for learning as appropriate;
- Provide additional time for student learning through a variety of strategies, using credentialed teachers to extend the opportunities for learning through before and after school sessions, Saturday school, summer sessions, and tutoring and mentoring.

The SLWG endorses the concept that strategies to support student learning are preferred alternatives to social promotion and grade retention. Furthermore, we endorse the concept that teachers, counselors, and administrators trained in effective research-based intervention strategies and in using their own reflections on best practices to support each student are the most cost-effective resource for student learning.

Into and through middle school to high school. Middle school organization and curriculum varies from school district to school district, ranging from departmentalized course offerings to integrated core curricula. Whatever structure is selected by a district, it must support students to learn the content standards, and it must avoid separating students into different curricular paths with different expectations for learning. The SLWG recommends that all middle schools should strive to help students take charge of their own learning and become independent learners and thinkers, and develop the confidence that they will graduate high school qualified for college admission. This confidence must be realistically based on students' clear understanding of the necessary academic preparation, financial requirements and supports, career exploration, and other elements necessary to ensure their success in high school no matter what post-high school option they choose. Moreover, middle schools need the resources and staffing to ensure that *all* students can have their academic needs met and enter high school well-prepared for the academic curriculum described in Recommendation 1.

High school graduation and beyond. It is common to see students as having two options upon graduating high school: graduates will *either* go to work *or* go to college. Although it is true that most students eventually “wind up” in one of these places, it would be untrue to say that many have a genuine choice. In the K-12 education system, the choice of immediately joining the workforce or attending college is usually made far before high school graduation, typically via course assignment decisions made with incomplete information. Students who “choose” the option of entering the workplace right after high school most often do not have the option of going to a four-year college. Students who are college-prepared rarely give serious thought to opting for the workplace. As we stated earlier, students will only have options if they are qualified to select among many alternatives available to them.

The communication and computational competencies that industry wants in workers and that colleges want in their entering students are remarkably similar. Most jobs in the 21st-century workforce will require some postsecondary education. It is reasonable, then, that California should set its sights on having its high school students graduating with the necessary competencies to begin college work.

To discourage students from closing down postsecondary options, the California education system must change the common perception that less is expected of students bound for the workplace or community college than for those who intend to go to a four-year university. California high schools and colleges are components of one education system.

An unmistakable and often destructive hierarchy exists among the three postsecondary segments, with the community colleges at the bottom. This hierarchy obscures and detracts from the strengths, purposes, dignity, and accomplishments of each of the components separately and of the entire system as a whole. Certainly, a central challenge to the higher education system in California is to clarify the multiple purposes of the community colleges and position the community colleges as a co-equal and critical component of the state’s higher education system rather than its lowest rung.

To strengthen the community colleges’ viable and systemic role in the state’s education system, we must look first to the community colleges themselves and be certain that they have in place the necessary resources and supports for high-quality student learning. At the same time, K-12 curriculum and counseling practices must be aligned to preparing all students to attend college. Students who have the desire and aspiration to attend college need to be provided with all the options available to them early (at least by middle school), so that they do not have the perception that the community colleges are a choice only by default.

To create an educational system where instructional time and support are flexible and targeted at ensuring successful school transitions for every student, the Student Learning Working Group recommends the following:

*Recommendation 6.1: Adequate learning support in K-12 should be defined as those resources and interventions that meet the academic needs of all students and ensure that all meet the state content standards and college preparatory requirements.*

The State must re-examine and redirect current structures, practices, and resources currently aimed at identifying and assisting students at risk for grade retention or failure to graduate. It also must provide considerable new resources. Important, here, is that adequate support in K-12 should be defined as those resources and interventions that are necessary to enable schools to meet the academic needs of all our learners and ensure that all students meet the state content standards and college preparatory requirements.

*Recommendation 6.2: To target learning support adequately, establish as standard practice the use of classroom-based diagnostic assessments that specifically link to interventions aimed at enabling students to meet the standards and college entrance and placement requirements.*

Learning support cannot be provided meaningfully in a system that uses norm-referenced tests to determine who needs support and the type of support needed, since such measures provide little substantive information about students' academic strengths and gaps. Neither can support be provided meaningfully if the system delays that support until just before or after a student fails a "high stakes" assessment that carries negative consequences for the student.

Decisions about which students need support and what support are most appropriately derived from ongoing classroom-based diagnostic assessments.<sup>8</sup> Such assessments allow educators to pinpoint the specific assistance students require, and they point to interventions that respond to particular learning needs. *Interventions must not be of the type traditionally used in remedial programs—e.g., stand-alone programs focused on basic skills.* Rather, they should consist of additional time and instructional support in curriculum matched to the standards and college preparatory courses.

*Recommendation 6.3: Provide additional learning supports at grades 3, 8, and in the last two years of high school to support students who take longer to meet standards or may be ready to accelerate.*

Although it is important to meet the needs of students throughout their K-12 career, it is acknowledged that currently there is a need for additional targeted interventions at key transition point for many traditionally underserved students. As with other learning supports, these must be developed with the intention of addressing student learning and development rather than remediating failure. They must enable students to meet the standards and college entrance and placement requirements. Examples include English language learners who need extended learning opportunities; community college courses for seniors who need additional courses to meet university entrance and placement; and double-dose algebra courses in grade 8 for those who need it.

*Recommendation 6.4: Provide continuing information and counseling and planning, regarding college requirements and student financial aid to all teachers, students and*

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<sup>8</sup> Many diagnostic assessments linked to appropriate curriculum materials are available online or can be accessed as part of a web-based tool.



*families, and provide families college-going “accountability” reports that make clear their child’s progress toward college and careers.*

UC has developed an ongoing student information system (Individual Academic Planner) that provides a useful model for this type of guidance and reporting to families. Of course, this recommendation must be accompanied by a serious reduction in current counselor and teacher workloads, since accomplishing this goal is not possible in schools that have 1 counselor for 500 or more students and teachers with student loads of 170-190.

Importantly, however, the challenge of assisting K-12 students navigate the academic pathway toward college will be eased considerably by the implementation of other recommendations in this report. For example, linking high school course requirements with common college expectations will largely obviate the current problem of graduating seniors who have satisfied their high school requirements, but are not prepared for college-level work or qualified to apply to a CSU or UC.

*Recommendation 6.5: Develop mechanisms that grant college credit to high school students based on demonstrated learning.*

Options for high school students to gain college credit include: honors courses, Advanced Placement and equivalent alternative courses, college courses offered on high school campuses, part-time enrollment at a local college, “2 plus 2” occupational programs, special college summer school programs and an array of computer-based, distance education courses. Concurrent enrollments and opportunities for high school students to earn college credit are common alternatives for schools serving middle and high-income students. However, because these opportunities are at least as appropriate and necessary, though less widely available, for low-income students, the State must make certain that the opportunities to obtain college credit while in high school are equitably available to all students. Importantly, such options should never be allowed to further disadvantage students who have demonstrably fewer opportunities to take advantage of them. Exceptions to the standard curriculum/course admissions requirements can also be mitigated by greater admissions flexibility on the part of the CSU and UC.

*Recommendation 6.6: Use authentic assessments that measure students’ high school accomplishments, including student work samples and portfolio entries, in relevant academic subjects for college admission and placement.*

Although this should reduce the overall testing burden on students, the State should also guarantee that students have the opportunity and financial support to prepare for and to take any necessary additional exams for college admission, including the PSAT, SAT, ACT, and AP tests, including the payment of fees.

*Recommendation 6.7: Mandate the development of transparent and sustainable articulation and transfer processes that provide students with clear curriculum guidance about the transition between high schools and college and between two- and four-year colleges and universities.*

A host of policies could ease considerably the often opaque and complex transition process of students between high school and college and between two- and four-year

colleges. For example, the State and the UC Board of Regents should require and support the implementation of dual admissions programs to UC and CSU that link high school preparation, community college coursework, and university admissions; expand transfer and career counseling on the community college campuses; (provide financial incentives to colleges to implement programs for community college students to) accelerate progress toward the BA such as concurrent community college–university enrollment, wherein the university offers select upper division coursework at community college campuses. Implementing other transfer policies should be focused on reducing the current barriers and providing necessary learning supports (financial, academic, housing, etc.) to enable more community college transfer students’ to achieve success in UC and CSU as full-time students.

*Recommendation 6.8. Support the implementation of “dual admissions” programs that support the transfer of community college students to CSU and UC*

The Student Learning Working Group recommends that the State support the joint University of California and California Community College Dual Admission Plan. This plan will assure University admission to additional thousands of California’s underserved students. Already approved by the University’s Board of Regents and supported by California Community Colleges, the Dual Admissions Program can provide a new path to the University, over and above the means that currently exist. Participants in this program would be identified from within the top 12.5% of each high school who are not UC eligible for freshman admission. These students would apply for admission to the UC campus(es) of their choice, receive a dual admission offer guaranteeing acceptance, contingent upon their satisfactory completion at a community college of UC course requirements and achievement of a prescribed level of academic performance. This program combines the community college’s advantages of geographic accessibility and financial economy for students, while extending their opportunity to complete a UC baccalaureate degree. If this recommendation is implemented it would have the effect of expanding the enrollment pool well beyond the pool of students who currently qualify for freshman admission to UC.

Similarly, the State should provide increased resources for an enhanced transfer admission guarantee program between the California State University and California Community Colleges. Like the UC, program, CSU’s program is designed to accord community college students a sense of commitment and clarity toward the goal of achieving the baccalaureate that is accorded to freshmen enrolling at the California State University. The current program is designed to provide support services (counseling, information, tutoring, financial aid) to California Community College students whose goal is the completion of the baccalaureate degree at a California State University campus. Program participants are expected to sign an agreement that indicates the specific campus, term, and major of the baccalaureate program to which they aspire. In turn, the California State University campus is obliged to describe precisely the requirements needed for successful transition from the California Community Colleges to the CSU campus, term, and major of choice and to reserve a space for that student in the term and major indicated and to provide the support services described in collaboration with the California Community Colleges.

*Recommendation 6.9: Assign responsibility and provide targeted resources at the postsecondary level to enable increasing numbers of college students to keep up with their academic coursework and attain certificates and degrees.*

New models of teaching and learning have been implemented with increasing success in community colleges and universities in California. The most effective models integrate core disciplinary instruction with supplemental and co-curricular support for students which is provided as part of the structured academic program. The distinctive feature of such programs is that the incorporation of supplemental instruction and the reinforcement of learning activities do not require that individual students navigate complex bureaucracies to access supplemental resources, but rather receive them as part of the overall plan of instruction. This model presently has many successful forms which include, but are not limited to, learning communities, first year experience programs, teaching assistants as learning coaches in academic classrooms, and the linking of academic with discipline-specific study skill courses. We recommend that these approaches be supported, not only at Community Colleges, but also at the CSU and UC.

## **A Fair and Useful Assessment System**

### **Recommendation 7:**

**Develop an integrated and coherent assessment system that monitors programs as well as student learning and guides the provision of additional learning support.**

A major aspect of the Working Group's deliberations about assessment concerned the development of an integrated, coherent *system* of assessment that could serve multiple purposes, avoid unnecessary cost and duplication, and support the learning outcomes we want for students. The principles for an assessment system below and the more detailed recommendations that follow can be best realized in a system with several parts: 1) a state system of program assessment; 2) local systems for individual student assessment; and 3) a shared system of state and local assessment for graduation based on exhibitions of performance, knowledge of content, and reflections on learning. Together, these assessments should have certain characteristics that support the State's broad goals for its educational system. They should:

- measure progress toward the full range of goals and standards;
- be as authentic as possible (i.e. representing real performance tasks and situations);
- measure higher order skills and abilities (e.g. ability to analyze, synthesize, apply knowledge in new situations, produce, create);
- emphasize depth and power rather than breadth and surface knowledge;
- be criterion-referenced, measuring and reporting what students have learned, rather than how they stand in relation to norms or other representations of the “bell curve”;<sup>9</sup>
- report progress beyond minimums toward higher levels of proficiency;
- provide multiple ways for students to demonstrate their skills and knowledge, including different kinds of performances and multiple assessment strategies and measures that accommodate the diversity of communities and learners including students with disabilities;
- provide multiple opportunities and occasions for assessment that allow students to demonstrate their proficiency and allow teachers to evaluate student growth in a longitudinal, cumulative fashion using several kinds of evidence (e.g. samples of work, observations, performance on tasks);
- be as open as possible, with publicly known standards and rubrics rather than secret test items. The results and the test items themselves should be made available immediately and reported in ways that enable teachers to guide students and design further learning opportunities that allow students and families to take a more active role in directing their own learning;
- allow for the determination of student accomplishment by exhibition of performance rather than course credits or seat time;

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<sup>9</sup> If norm-referenced tests remain part of the assessment system they should comprise only a small part of the system, consist of a constricted test, and restricted to no more than three grade levels.

- prohibit the use of a single measure to make high stakes decisions about students; important decisions, including course placement, grade retention, graduation, state scholarship funds, and college eligibility, must not be made solely on the basis of a test score.<sup>10</sup>

These criteria are consistent with national trends and developments in the restructuring of assessment that are accompanying the restructuring of education. States across the nation—from New York to Minnesota and Vermont to Texas—are engaged in developing outcomes-oriented, performance-based assessment systems aimed at much more challenging skills, abilities, and learning goals.

The Working Group recommendations below generally favor local assessments when it comes to making important decisions that affect individual students. These local assessments are not only more accurate and fair to students, they can be profoundly powerful in affecting the overall understanding of local schooling—both within schools and in communities. Many of the recommendations bring teachers, school district officials, and the public into much more immediate contact with the relevance and appropriateness of local curriculum, pedagogy, and the assessment itself. As such, assessment can be seen as an adult-learning activity in its own right as well as adults learning about students. Since acquiring the skills and background for good assessment is a long-range, developmental process, this sustained examination keeps assessment from becoming “stale” and so automated that it ceases to promote the continual changes and “fine tuning” of educational programs. By contrast, single dimension statewide tests and publisher-designed tests inspire far less local commitment and are often seen as routine hurdles that take time away from teaching and engagement with families. The central dynamic for good assessment and maintaining high standards at the local level will be the interplay between the State’s reporting of aggregate data on multiple measures, local districts making sense of their own local performance measures, and schools, students and families contextualizing individual students’ performances within these broader reports.

*Recommendation 7.1. The State should assess programs to monitor and report aggregate student performance.*

The State's program assessments should be state-of-the art, leading good practice by modeling what is expected of districts and schools, including the use of projects, performance tasks, and other forms of authentic assessment. The State’s assessments should ultimately rely on multiple assessment strategies and tasks and use a set of performance standards that represent levels of performance across multiple domains of performance in each field. These levels of performance should be reported in concrete terms, describing the kinds of tasks students can perform at each level in ways that are understandable to students, parents, teachers, and the general public.

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<sup>10</sup> Student sanctions based solely upon the tests (grade retention, graduation by test only) violate the testing standards of the American Psychological Association/ American Educational Research Association.

*Recommendation 7.2: The State should charge local districts with developing their own assessment systems for providing information about and guiding instruction for individual students.*

The State should provide school districts with benchmarks for developing internal assessment systems that include:

- the state's learning outcomes;
- learning goals and standards developed at the local level that are consistent with and complementary to those of the State;
- multifaceted and cumulative local assessments;
- a range of performance modes that are based on multiple assessment strategies—including observation of students, samples of student work, and performance tasks; and
- meeting the criteria for scope, authenticity, openness, and compatibility with higher learning goals.

Cumulative assessments of student progress and performance would be required for evaluation at each schooling level, e.g. early elementary, middle grades, high school. Local schools and districts should determine when these cumulative assessments occur. These assessments, which should include a portfolio of student work and evaluations of student performance, should be longitudinal in nature, taking student progress and individual talents into account along with levels of performance. Individual local student assessments should be used to inform and improve instruction, not to deny students access to further learning opportunities.

*Recommendation 7.3: The State should establish an Assessment Quality Assurance Panel to evaluate both state and local assessment systems.*

This Assessment Quality Assurance Panel should be comprised of representatives from higher education faculty senates and K-12 professional associations who bring appropriate curriculum and assessment expertise. This body would be charged with ensuring that both state and local assessment systems should meet established professional standards for assessment use. For example, no decision regarding a student should be made on the basis of a single piece of evidence (e.g. a test score). Decisions about students including placement or promotion decisions should be based on the use of at least three types of data and evidence: samples of student work, teacher observation, and performance tests or tasks.

The Panel should encourage local practitioners to develop innovative and thoughtful assessment programs by inviting local initiatives and supporting local development with assessment options. Among the resources the State can provide is access to a portfolio or bank of assessment ideas, tasks, and instruments that have been developed through state and national projects (e.g. the New Standards Project, the California Learning Record). The State's role should be to support districts in developing these systems and to provide assessment options, along with research and information about assessment strategies and issues. The State would not prescribe the assessments districts must use. However, the

State should proscribe appropriate and inappropriate uses of tests as part of its role to evaluate and ensure the appropriateness of local systems.

*Recommendation 7.4: The State should develop graduation standards and performance-based methods by which students demonstrate their competencies in consultation with experts from higher education and local school districts, as appointed by their respective academic senates, and with the participation of California's diverse communities.*

The graduation standards, derived from the State's learning standards, should specify the kinds of competencies students must demonstrate to graduate. Achievement of these competencies should be documented through both the California Exit Exam and a Graduation Portfolio—a compilation of record data, projects, products, performance tests or tasks, observations and evaluations by teachers, attestations, and other evidence that the competencies have been achieved. As in European examination systems, exam scores would be part of a student's record. This would comprise a portion of the Exit Exam rating, but should not be used as the sole basis for a decision about whether a student will graduate from high school.

The actual form, content, and assessment of the portfolio requirements should be developed locally. The graduation portfolio should grow out of and be related to the cumulative assessment strategies used throughout the earlier grades by the local school or district. The school's assessment system should allow for the accumulation of portfolio credits throughout the students' high school years until graduation. Schools should be encouraged to engage their faculties in collaborative development of portfolio standards and benchmarks. Team evaluations of student work should be encouraged, as this approach enriches the assessment process by marshalling multiple viewpoints and varied perspectives.

While the graduation portfolio would be developed locally, districts should have the option of satisfying portions of their portfolio requirements by selecting from existing state developed assessments and other options the State makes available. Performance-based options (e.g. projects, performance tasks, and portfolios) for all examinations should be developed immediately for districts that want to implement them

*Recommendation 7.5: The State will develop reports of student performance which describe how many students can actually perform particular kinds of tasks and at what levels, rather than assigning a numerical score that has no substantive meaning to students, families, teachers, or the public.*

Reporting of student performance results will need to change alongside the reforms in assessment. One necessary change will be the reporting of assessment information according to different criterion-referenced performance levels pegged to the kinds of learning outcomes they reflect, rather than norm-referenced percentile rankings. We should know, for example, that 80 percent of students can write a persuasive essay that uses evidence effectively, rather than that the average California student scored a 72 on a particular test.

*Recommendation 7.6: The State should develop, legislate, and fund the implementation of a non-voluntary, longitudinal student data system that enables the State and schools to do the following:*

- *evaluate student progress toward meeting the standards, using measures that assess the contribution of the current year of schooling to students' growth;*
- *identify and examine the factors that promote access to high-quality resources, opportunity to master content standards, and significantly increased achievement for all students at key transition points in the system.*

The State's assessment system must allow for reporting on progress towards standards that are based on aggregated longitudinal data about individual students. Data should allow for analysis of how much actual growth in performance students have achieved, rather than averaging school-level data that is influenced by shifts in student population and other factors.

An integrated longitudinal data system will enable the State and schools to assess students' achievement over time, and to identify and examine the factors that promote access, opportunity to learn, and success for all students at key transition points in the system. An integrated PreK-16 student information system includes student demographics, linguistic status, history of schools attended (including opportunities to learn and performance history), regional differences in attainment, etc., as well as multiple measures of student learning. This information is crucial to understand the flow of all students (including English language learners and immigrant students) through the educational continuum.

This type of comprehensive data system, currently being constructed as the California School Information System (CSIS), should constitute the foundation of the State's future ability to "identify and examine the factors that promote access, opportunity to learn, and success for all students" as the charge states here. All California schools and districts must participate in the CSIS. This universal participation is necessary for the State to analyze and report students' learning growth over time, and to identify and examine the state and local factors that affect access, opportunity to learn, and achievement for all students at key transition points in the system.

*Recommendation 7.7: The State should require that reports of student performance should describe the programmatic context in which student outcomes are achieved.*

A new form of what the State now presents as its state reports should emphasize descriptive information about school practices, instructional programs, staffing, and other aspects of students' learning opportunities. This report should be built upon the evidence developed in the school quality review process. Reporting should also include analysis of funding, resources, and allocations of expenditures between schools and districts as well as among expenditure categories.



The state report should provide descriptive data about school programs and related student outcomes. For example, an analysis of assessment data in mathematics should describe the kinds of mathematical tasks students are able to accomplish, the number of students taking mathematics courses, and interventions provided at the earliest grade level to increase student learning.<sup>11</sup>

The goal of the reporting system should be to enhance accountability by providing information that will enable the public to evaluate how well the State and districts are progressing toward attainment of California's goals for outcomes, practices, and resource equity, and also to analyze how and why.

*Recommendation 7.8: The State develop, fund, and implement state and local communication strategies to ensure that educational personnel, students and their families understand the meaning of test results (scores and performance levels) and their implications for students' educational performance, quality and choices.*

The State will provide prototypical information for teachers, counselors, and administrators to use in explaining and interpreting test results to families. Included in this kit are suggestions, options, resources, assistance, and interventions to inform and support families with their children's educational performance, quality, and choices.

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<sup>11</sup> Data from the state NAEP would provide some of this kind of information to augment School Quality Review data and much enriched forms of assessment information.

## **Systemic Accountability and Review**

### **Recommendation 8:**

**Establish a system of regularly reported indicators for accountability and improvement.**

“Accountability” can mean different things to different people and in different situations. A common occurrence is for people to agree about the importance of accountability, but to differ how they envision the concept being used in practice. Accountability is frequently limited to the acts of measuring, reporting, and responding to schools' and students' test scores. Once scores are reported, the schools or students are “held accountable” through systems of rewards and sanctions, or perhaps simply publicity. Significantly, such accountability most often flows in a particular direction; students, and then their teachers and parents, are likely to be “held accountable” by school boards, the State, or the public. There are few mechanisms for students, teachers, or families to use tests or other performance measures to hold anyone else accountable.

In contrast to this limited view of accountability, the Student Learning Working Group calls for the construction and implementation of a vision of systemic, shared accountability—a two-way, mutual, and blameless vision of accountability wherein improved learning results are tightly linked to improved conditions for learning. Systemic, shared accountability includes those things that the State and school districts do to *provide* high-quality education for all students as well as to *evaluate* school offerings and student performance. It focuses on the provision of high-quality education to all students. That focus must be shared and accepted by families, community organizations, businesses, and other Californians along with state agencies, school boards, administrators, teachers, counselors, and students.

Such an accountability system for California must be guided by valid, comprehensive, understandable, and regularly reported data on a set of indicators that permit useful, informed, democratic decisions and judgments about student learning and the conditions under which the students learn. Ultimately, adequate and well-advised support for public schools depends upon the public's will to shape public priorities and make wise investments on behalf of high-quality and democratic schooling. Clearly, a system of multiple indicators for accountability and improvement is crucial to marshalling public will and wise investments in the schooling that most benefit students and the state.

To develop such a system of accountability for California, the State must be guided by the following principles:

- Testing may be part of an accountability system; however, testing does not equal accountability;
- Accountability systems increase the probability of but do not always guarantee high-quality practice leading to positive outcomes;
- Effective accountability systems call attention to needs and direct resources to addressing those needs, rather than initiating punitive measures;

- Indicators, like test scores, are information for an accountability system; they are not the system itself;
- Tests can enhance or undermine learning and accountability depending on what they measure and how they are used and how they are administered; and
- Accountability occurs only when policy makers act on information in ways that create better opportunities and outcomes for individuals and groups of students.

The recommendations below are aimed at creating such a system for California. The current statewide Academic Performance Index (API) and the School Accountability Report Cards (SARC) are the state's first, imperfect steps toward a useful information system supporting education in California. As currently constructed and reported, however, these instruments don't begin to meet the principles outlined above. As such, they are insufficient to inform policymakers, the public, the press, and parents about whether the educational system and the schools are fulfilling their obligations to every student. To develop a meaningful system of educational accountability, the State must augment and redesign its current efforts as follows:

*Recommendation 8.1: Develop, legislate and fund a comprehensive system of PreK-16 educational indicators. These indicators will require data of the highest quality and utility provided by a longitudinal student-focused data system and from other school-level data about educational resources, conditions and learning opportunities. These indicators must be constructed and reported in ways to reveal the character and distribution of learning conditions and outcomes for various groups of California students across and within schools and systems.*

The State must develop and report yearly on a comprehensive, yet parsimonious set of educational indicators, constructed from the data provided by an integrated, longitudinal learner-focused data system and by other school-level data about educational resources, conditions, and learning opportunities. (See Appendix G for a comprehensive list of indicators.) Such indicators must be easy to understand and thereby trusted as relevant. They must tell a coherent story about the status of the educational system, enable policymakers and the public to recognize problems on the horizon, and guide interventions. They must measure common and enduring features of the educational process by means that are amenable to action. They must enable policymakers, professionals, families, and the public to monitor the status and quality of the educational system and provide information to guide the improvement of policy and practice. The State's accountability framework must specify mechanisms for monitoring and assessing the distribution and quality of access and opportunity, as well as outcomes.

Useful accountability systems monitor all levels (student, education personnel, school, district, state education agencies, legislature, and governor) of the educational system, and include indicators that measure the effectiveness of each level (PreK-16) in exercising its responsibilities. Consequently, the State's indicators should enable the public to hold policymakers and governing bodies accountable for providing the commitment, policy mechanisms, resources, and conditions of a high-quality system of education, as well as holding schools, educators, and students accountable for the

outcomes that result. Additionally, the indicators provide comprehensive information about all schools, not just about those that are “low-performing.” Although there are many exemplary schools, the State needs information about these schools just as it needs information about schools where students are underserved. Finally, the indicators must permit analysis of opportunities and outcomes by racial, ethnic, linguistic, and gender populations, and among students assigned to various programs within schools.

State policymakers must be mindful of adding additional reporting and paperwork burdens on schools, but schools may not object if they were to see prompt, tangible responses based on the data provided to them. Good information about the state’s schools must not be compromised.

*Recommendation 8.2: Develop the K-12 Academic Performance Index (API) so that it includes indicators such as dropout rates, grade promotion, and other indicators of outcomes, in addition to multiple measures of student achievement*

Such measures of inclusiveness (keeping students in school, keeping them in core, academic classes, moving them through the grades) provide valuable indicators of school performance in themselves. Including them in the API also will balance test data in ways that reduce the likelihood that schools have boosted scores by pushing kids out, keeping them out, assigning them to special education, or retaining them in grade—all of which artificially inflate test scores but harm students and do not actually improve achievement.

*Recommendation 8.3: Create and report a K-12 “Opportunities for Teaching and Learning Index” (OTL) that parallels the API. This index will report schools’ performance on standards for high-quality learning resources, conditions, and opportunities. Like the API, the OTL should be reported in ways that permit statewide school comparisons, and comparisons with high-and average-performing schools. The State will create benchmarks and rubrics of prototype schools that will serve as desirable models of the goals every school is expected to achieve.*

Such an index must be based on standards for resources, conditions, and opportunities that specify what government agencies—states and school districts—must provide all schools, in rich and poor neighborhoods alike so that educators can offer the curricular opportunities and programs required for the achievement of student performance standards. Similarly, the index must also incorporate benchmarks of standards of practice that direct school organizations to develop approaches that enable students to master the State’s and local school district’s content standards and college admissions requirements. The elements for both types of standards—resources and practices—are broadly outlined in Recommendations 3, 4, and 5 above. To be genuinely helpful, both the API and OTL indices must permit meaningful comparisons across schools, districts and the state.

*Recommendation 8.4: Develop a long-term strategic plan for the meaningful use of accountability data and indicators by state and local policymakers, educators, and all Californians. This plan should include ways to determine the impact of programs and interventions designed to improve learning conditions and outcomes and for remedying inadequacies. Included in this plan should be*

- *provisions for preparing K-12 school administrators, teachers, counselors, and families to use CSIS data collection and analysis as an integral part of school and classroom improvement.*
- *a plan for developing the capacity of community organizations to work with families in understanding and responding to accountability data about their schools.*

To use indicators and benchmarks effectively, educators and local communities need the resources, technical assistance/training infrastructure, as well as the hardware and software for analysis. Such infrastructure would also go a long way to reducing the burden of reporting data to the State. In addition, they need district and school level support in the use of data to inform instruction at the classroom level and community engagement. Families and educators who engage together as school research and assessment teams can use local data to monitor and recommend improvements in their schools. For example, widespread teacher involvement in moderated scoring of performance tasks improves teacher knowledge. Educator and family dialogue around disaggregated data can yield richer understandings of curriculum and teaching and generate strategies for improvement. Community based organizations, together with educators, could provide local community responses to schools, districts, and the State and regularly provide workshops and public sessions to help families understand benchmarks, rubrics, and accountability mechanisms. However, families must be assured that their participation in the school accountability process is authentic and protected. Appendix H specifies some of the necessary protections.

Importantly, students can also benefit from learning how to assess one's situation, decide upon remedies, plan the necessary remedial action to correct the situation, measure how well the actions were performed, and identify the goals being met. Such habits of mind are all aspects of self-sufficiency that are valuable for every student's civic participation, academic advancement, and value in the workplace.

*Recommendation 8.5: The State, in collaboration with California Community Colleges (CCC), California State University (CSU) and the University of California (UC) systems, develop, and require K-12 schools to provide teachers, counselors, students, and families yearly reports that document individual students' progress toward CSU/UC eligibility.*

Such a report should include progress toward career choices and work preparation as well as the students' position in the four-year, college preparation sequence, and would be updated each marking period. The report should also include a summary of existing school and community-support programs, so that families can help ensure that students are guided into appropriate help.

*Recommendation 8.6: The State must provide incentives for schools to create high-quality programs and to support the students with the greatest educational need. Incentives for such schools should be directed at supporting the spread of these educational innovations to as many other schools as possible.*

Exemplary schools should be recognized both by documenting their successes for sharing with other schools and by having additional or continued autonomy. Recognition of school

initiative and achievement should promote learning and cooperation, rather than competition among schools for financial rewards. They will enable us to create not just learner-centered classrooms, but also learning-oriented systems of education in the state of California. Successful schools should be awarded grants to further develop, document, and share their practices with other schools in school-to-school networks, much like the teacher-to-teacher networks that have been so successful in stimulating classroom and curriculum reforms through the California Subject Matter Projects. These school-to-school networks should be expanded with a more widespread program for recognizing, documenting, and sharing school successes.

*Recommendation 8.7: Develop interventions in K-12 to promote student learning and success in schools of greatest need. These practices will support schools' efforts to build their organizational capacity, develop high-quality programs and support student learning.*

Intervention strategies that are research-based and provide supports should be developed for schools of greatest need. When the State ascertains that there are serious shortcomings in a school's resources, conditions, opportunities, or student learning, a process should be set in motion that enables and requires the State and local districts to provide intervention and problem-solving resources and strategies. The State could require schools of greatest need to develop action plans to develop opportunities for teaching and learning. This problem-solving process should involve a qualified team of educators in evaluating the nature and sources of problems. It should deal with the root causes of school failure—including the availability and use of qualified personnel, administrative support, curriculum resources, organizational structures, student grouping and promotion practices, and other core features that define students' experiences in school.

The State and district should cooperatively assume responsibility for ensuring that the resources and technical assistance needed to implement the plan are made available. If policy changes are needed to implement the plan or to ensure that the problems experienced by the school do not recur, then the State and local district should also assume responsibility for developing new policies that are more supportive of school success.

It is critical that the State's efforts to recognize success, remedy low performance, and ensure equitable learning is based on thoughtful, educationally sound means for identifying schools that require intervention of the State. When incentives are triggered by simplistic measurements such as average school test scores, perverse incentives are created that harm students. Since such measures can be manipulated with changes in school population, schools often seek to boost their average test scores in educationally counterproductive ways. California's efforts to support school success and provide student safeguards must be more sophisticated and more educationally productive than these mechanistic approaches. They need to be based on the growth and success of all students in the schools and on educationally sound evaluations of school practices.

*Recommendation 8.8: Bring postsecondary education into an integrated accountability system by requiring and supporting public postsecondary institutions to do all of the following:*

- *Develop a commonly used longitudinal data base;*
- *Develop and report a set of accountability indicators that monitor quality and equity in access and attainment across geographic regions and among students from different racial and gender groups (i.e., patterns of admissions, community college transfer rates, certificate and degree completion, time to degree, postgraduate status); and*
- *Engage public post-secondary institutions (perhaps in conjunction with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)) in a process of examining and making recommendations about whether and how the state's educational system could benefit from a series of indicators of post-secondary students' learning, and explore the technology and the cultural and political implications of such a system.*

Although the principles of accountability apply at both the K-12 and postsecondary levels, the particulars of accountability must differ for the two levels. Elementary and secondary standards work toward a set of knowledge and skills common to all students. Postsecondary certificate programs, baccalaureate, and advanced degree programs are based on student specialization in particular disciplines. One of the strengths of California higher education institutions is a continuing reexamination of what constitute appropriate depth and breadth requirements and curricular variation. It is within the undergraduate major or graduate subject matter that faculty establishes competencies. Any recommendations on accountability should reflect these differences.

Efforts to bring the postsecondary segments into an integrated accountability system should also build on the accountability mechanisms that are already in place. In the community college system, a comprehensive set of college-specific performance and outcome measures have been established to document enrollment, successful course completion, advancement to the next academic level within basic skill disciplines, workforce preparation, degree and certificate attainment, and the achievement of university transfer. Under the auspices of the system-wide Partnership for Excellence initiative (PFE), baseline data is gathered for each of the 108 colleges and used to establish targets for annual growth and improvement. While provisions for financial rewards and sanctions for institutions that either met or fell short of target goals were established, funding augmentations needed to implement the rewards and sanctions were suspended for the 2001-2002 program year. All colleges however, are required to provide the State with ongoing periodic progress reports on these basic accountability measures.

UC and CSU currently employ a Compact/Partnership model. Specifically, this model establishes a two-way partnership between the State and higher education institutions in which the State commits to an adequate and stable level of funding for higher education in exchange for a commitment by the institutions to achieve specific outcomes in areas that further state goals (for example, providing access to all eligible students, reducing "time-to-degree," increasing the production of graduates in high-need areas like teaching and engineering/computer science).

Although there is no precedent for using sound social science evaluation methods, and certainly no tests, for determining the learning and teaching effectiveness of postsecondary education, California's colleges could certainly learn much from a variety of data gathering. Nevertheless, we must have data that report the success of postsecondary institutions, as well as K-12 schools, in educating California's different student populations equally well.



### **Recommendation 9:**

#### **Ensure ongoing, intersegmental coordination and review**

Since the 1980s, two bodies have provided leadership in intersegmental coordination. *The California Education Round Table* (and its programmatic arm, the Intersegmental Coordinating Committee (ICC)) is a voluntary association comprised of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the chief executive officers of the public higher education systems, the chair of the Executive Committee of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities, and the Executive Director of the California Postsecondary Education Commission. The Round Table seeks to promote collaboration among the segments to ensure that “All students will meet high academic standards such that they will be prepared for subsequent success in education or the workplace without the need for remediation in core academic disciplines.” The *Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates (ICAS)* is a voluntary organization consisting of representatives of the academic senates of the three systems of public higher education in California. ICAS fosters collaboration at the state level on academic issues in higher education. ICAS has responsibility for initiating academic programs and policies which are intersegmental in nature, with specific attention to transfer issues, articulation, general education requirements, and educational quality.

However, we recommend that the legislature strengthen the State’s intersegmental coordination and review in the following ways:

*Recommendation 9.1: Augment membership of the Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates (ICAS) with faculty from California’s K-12 schools. This new K-12/higher education intersegmental faculty body should be charged with reviewing and recommending changes, if needed, related to the alignment and coordination of curricula, assessment, admissions, and placement.*

If the State is to fulfill its obligation to provide a high-quality education that enables students to prepare for entrance and success at any public education institution, then postsecondary faculty and K-12 leaders must agree on the content knowledge and specific competencies required of teachers and faculty at the critical juncture of the transitions in the educational continuum. Specifically, this body should be charged with reviewing and recommending changes, if needed, in each of the following areas;

- the State K-12 content and performance standards in each of the subject areas every five years;
- State assessments of student learning every five years;
- eligibility and admissions criteria (including the content of the A-G pattern) for CSU and UC every five years;
- the competencies required for successful, non-remedial participation in all California’s public colleges, including community colleges every five years;
- the alignment of college and university admissions and placement requirements with K-12 curriculum standards;
- strategies being used to support students successful schooling transitions, including learning support programs in colleges and universities;

- intersegmental efforts focused on college preparation, access, successful participation, and degree attainment;
- dual admission programs, and their accompanying including learning supports;
- mechanisms to support the transfer from two-year colleges to four-year institutions (including UC), including financial support and flexible enrollment options (e.g., core competencies for lower division coursework for the community colleges, CSU, and UC to ensure seamless transfer among institutions; university course offerings on community college campuses; full-funding of transfer students and part-time enrollment);
- part-time exclusions to enrollment at UC; and
- policies related to residency and eligibility for state resident fees.

In no way, however, should this strengthened intersegmental collaboration be construed as giving higher education oversight over K-12, or as giving K-12 education oversight over higher education. Rather it means a reciprocal relationship that influences the content and processes of both K-12 and university education and informs policymaking by the appropriate legislative and administrative bodies.

*Recommendation 9.2: Develop policies and fund initiatives on a regional basis to support the transition of students through the educational system*

Among the most prized contributions that higher education can make to K-12 education is the involvement of its faculty in the public schools. Both the University of California and the California State University have developed intervention programs designed to increase the college participation rates of students historically underserved in higher education. These outreach and student academic preparation programs provide academic support to California's diverse population of elementary, middle, and secondary students who are disadvantaged educationally and economically. However, because of limited resources, UC and CSU are unable currently to provide these services to all California public high schools with low college participation rates or to middle schools that serve as feeder schools to these high schools. Therefore, the legislature should provide support for expanding these services that prepare students academically for admission to public four-year universities.

*Recommendation 9.3: Expand the faculty reward system in the public colleges and universities and provide compensation for K-12 teachers to support faculty involvement in intersegmental programs, providing incentives for higher education faculty to engage in PreK-16 alignment of standards, curriculum, assessment, etc., and in PreK-16 outreach.*

In order to facilitate faculty involvement, higher education needs to demonstrate that it places value on the involvement of its faculty in inter-segmental activities that are designed to enhance student achievement and contribute to the reform efforts underway in our schools. Moreover, the PreK-12 system must also demonstrate in tangible ways that teachers are expected to participate in such activities and will be rewarded for that participation.

## **An Immediate Intervention to Increase Access**

### **Recommendation 10:**

**Increase access to the University of California for students in most educationally disadvantaged schools.**

We believe that, over the long haul, the recommendations included in this report will lead to a coherent and integrated PreK-University system that will yield very different and far more positive educational outcomes than are currently the case. In particular, the systemic changes we recommend here will both increase the quality of student learning and significantly reduce the glaring gaps in achievement and college participation.

However, it is unreasonable to expect these changes to occur immediately. They will require considerable investment of resources, policy deliberation, and time to achieve. At the same time, it is also unreasonable to ask Californians who have been poorly served by the current educational system to wait a decade or more for significantly greater quality and opportunity.

Consequently, we add to the recommendations above a significant, but short-term intervention that will demonstrate the State's commitment to educate all Californians well and open long-shut doors of opportunity to underserved students. Specifically, the University of California should use to the fullest extent the Master Plan's and University's Admissions by Exception policy (that allows for 6% of admitted students to be selected from those not meeting the basic eligibility criteria of the University) to admit ineligible students from educationally disadvantaged schools who display academic promise, extraordinary talent, and leadership potential. To accompany this use of Admissions by Exception, the University must ensure that its on-campus academic support programs are sufficient to enable these students to succeed.

We believe that this recommendation can and should be implemented immediately in order to engage the University of California directly in addressing the problems of the widespread under-preparation of California's K-12 students. Importantly, such an intervention falls well within the UC mission, since the central focus of public universities is a commitment to public institutions and solving public problems. Clearly, no public problem is more salient and challenging than increasing educational quality and opportunity in our diverse state.

## Appendix A What is High-Quality Learning?

Learning prepares the individual for life in a diverse global society.

Learning opportunities exist throughout life and society, but it is the special responsibility of educational institutions to ensure that individuals receive the opportunity to:

- Learn and master the basic cognitive and social skills needed for success in life and the advanced knowledge and skills that will make them competitive with graduates of the best educational institutions in other states and nations;
- Develop an awareness and appreciation of the culture of California, the nation, and the world;
- Instill the social values of integrity, morality, discipline, and civic-mindedness;
- Develop an understanding of the impact of education on their lives and of the educational options available to them; and
- Nurture a love of learning and an enthusiasm for life-long learning.

Learning prepares the individual for work.

The obligation to work must be addressed by most people in their lifetime as the means by which they establish a desired lifestyle and wholesome families. Every sector of the global economy is evolving in response to rapid change, in ways that underscore the growing importance of learning. Requisite job skills are shifting from a reliance on physical ability to a reliance on the ability to use knowledge, solve problems, and think creatively and independently. Various job categories are disappearing and new employment sectors are emerging at an increasingly rapid pace. To ensure that learners are prepared for work, educational institutions play a special role in ensuring that individuals:

- Develop the habits and talents needed to succeed in the workplace;
- Acquire an understanding of life and career options available to them; and
- Learn the life skills needed to be independent and to provide for their family.

Learning prepares society to manage change and effectively respond to challenges.

California has achieved international recognition for social, economic, and scientific achievement largely as a result of its commitment to learning. California has profited immensely from the diversity of its citizens and the contributions of its college-educated populace. Today, the state's commitment must be expanded beyond traditional college degree programs to meet increasing societal demands for life-long learning. Public educational institutions have a special responsibility to:

- Advance high quality teaching and learning at each educational level and facilitate the successful transition of students from one educational level to the next;
- Advance the frontiers of knowledge;
- Assist in the improvement of elementary and secondary education;
- Apply their combined resources to effectively respond to the challenges of growth; diversity, and change that periodically emerge in the global society.

***We view these three learning goals as interwoven and as important for all students at each level of the educational system.***

## **Appendix B**

### **Charge to the Student Learning Working Group**

The Working Groups of the Joint Committee were formed to recommend how California's K-16 educational system can achieve the learning purposes described above from kindergarten through university. The Joint Committee charged the Student Learning Group's membership with making specific recommendations in seven areas:

1. Define a "high quality" education.
2. Identify and examine the factors that promote (and inhibit) access, opportunity to learn, and success for all students.
3. Identify key K-16 transition points and specify the needed system, professional, and student performance accountabilities for successful transitions.
4. Establish greater coordination across grades/segments by aligning K-16 curriculum and assessments.
5. Ensure that supplemental instructional services and resources (including so called remediation) lead to genuine opportunities and success.
6. Re-examine the eligibility criteria and admissions practices to four-year colleges and universities, and facilitate transfers from community college to four-year institutions.
7. Establish an accountability system that applies to participants at all levels of the K-16 system.

## Appendix C

### Professional Educators

**Ensure that all students K-16 have ready access to credentialed teachers, regularly work with counselors and credentialed administrators who combine subject matter knowledge, high expectations and knowledge of requirements and expectations at the next level in their work with and for all students.**

- Teachers with deep knowledge of the subjects they teach;
- Teachers who understand and use knowledge of learning and of students' differences to inform instructional decisions and multiple teaching strategies;
- Teachers who are adequately trained to teach the standards and college preparation requirements at the grade level or for the subject areas they are assigned to teach;
- Teachers who are adequately trained to address the language development needs of English Language Learners, and the developmental needs of special education students;
- Teachers who have the cultural and linguistic skills and backgrounds to provide exemplary teaching and learning for California's diverse communities;
- Teachers who have reasonable class sizes to devote sufficient time to each students' development (hence, are provided classrooms with a reasonable cap on class size);
- Teachers who have a caring attitude towards students;
- Teachers who receive ongoing professional development and training that includes time in their work year to plan with colleagues, to write, think, and learn about improving instruction, and to receive support for developing standards-based lessons and assessments;
- Teachers and other educational professionals who are prepared and willing to serve as instructional coaches and advocates for teachers and as advocates to support teaching and learning.
- Educational professionals at every school who serve as "mentors" for students, at every school, so that every student has an adult professional who knows him or her well and monitors his or her academic progress continuously
- Teachers, counselors, and librarians who are (trained) *knowledgeable* in college preparation and admissions, community college and four-year college programs, and postsecondary financial options;
- Counselors who are available to individual students at regular intervals throughout the school year;
- Counselors who serve as student advocates, and support the instructional leaders, and parent leaders in the schools;
- Administrators who function as an integral part of the teaching and learning system.
- Administrators who see themselves as the educational leader in teaching and learning at their school sites
- Administrators who value the role of collaboration, partnerships, and public engagement as a means to involve all stakeholders

- Administrators who are advocates to their students and staff to provide the best teaching and learning environment (facilities, safety, textbooks, technology, professional development, etc)

## **Appendix D**

### **Curriculum Materials**

**Adequate learning materials and resources that are most current, in good condition, and appropriate to the learning needs of students, including:**

- Suitable chairs, desks and other classroom equipment.
- Materials, equipment, and other instructional materials necessary to support the instructional program at each level, as recommended in the state content standards;
- Individual textbooks, workbooks and other instructional materials (e.g., graphing calculators for mathematics) for use in and out of school;
- Books that can be borrowed from the school library and elsewhere that the student may use individually;
- Computers with internet access that each student may use on a regular basis;
- Resources for teachers to tailor and creatively adapt curriculum to the interests and needs of individual students.
- Curriculum and materials for the English Language Learner
- Curriculum and materials for the learning disabled



## **Appendix E**

### **Learning Environments**

**Guarantee suitable learning environments for all students including classrooms, facilities and buildings including:**

- School facilities located within a reasonable commuting distance to student's home;
- Clean, well maintained, and well-lighted classrooms
- Classrooms with adequate ventilation, necessary heating and air conditioning
- Classrooms free of health hazards such as vermin, mold, and asbestos
- Uncrowded classrooms with adequate space for other instructional needs
- Adequate laboratories and studios for students to complete rigorous work in all subjects;
- Bathrooms and sanitary facilities that are unlocked, accessible, well-stocked and maintained in decent, safe, and sanitary condition;
- Outdoor space sufficient for exercise and sports and free of health and safety hazards;
- Adequate school nursing services;
- Adequate lunch periods with nutritious food;
- Educational programs during "off-track" periods;
- A safe and supportive school environment, including:
  - Protection from harassment or abuse of any kind;
  - A fair and nondiscriminatory system of student discipline;
  - A student body of a manageable size which permits the development of a safe and personalized learning community.
- A drug free and violence free school

## Appendix F

### **Definition of Learning Support:** **California Department of Education**

Learning support is the collection of school, home, and community resources, strategies and practices, and environmental and cultural factors that gives every young person the physical, emotional, and intellectual support he or she needs to learn.

Learning support includes the following two categories of strategies:

1. Additional instruction that supplements the general curriculum, and
2. Student support services and programs needed to address the barriers to learning.

*Additional instruction* is the provision of extra time for more focused instruction and/or increased student-teacher instructional contact time designed to help students achieve the learning standards.

*Student support services and programs* are strategies and interventions that address the barriers to student academic progress and may include, as needed, school guidance and counseling, strategies to improve attendance, violence and drug abuse prevention programs, coordination of community services, and increased parent or family involvement.

The *barriers to learning* that student support services may address include, but are not limited to:

- Attendance problems
- Behavior and discipline problems
- Family-related issues
- Health-related issues
- Nutrition-related issues
- Mobility/transfer issues
- School climate and safety concerns

## **Appendix G**

### **Indicators for an Adequate Accountability System**

#### Learning Conditions Indicators PreK-12

##### Professional Educators:

- Collect and report data of percentage of teachers assigned to schools including the following: (A) the length of teaching experience; (B) possession of a professional clear teaching credential. (C) National Board Certification.
- Percentage of teachers with emergency, pre-intern and intern permits and teachers assigned outside their subject area at schools
- Percentage of teachers teaching English Learners that have certification or credentials which prepare them for addressing the second language acquisition and language development needs of English Learners.
- The ratio of credentialed counselors to students;
- The percentage of credentialed counselors who receive orientation and information about career options, college admissions requirements, and financial aid from the colleges and universities
- The percentage of students and families in a counselor's load who receive orientation and information about college admissions requirements, and financial aid (e.g. SB 813 10<sup>th</sup> grade counseling)
- Percentage of assigned principals with a Tier II Administrative Credential for at least five years and having completed at least 150 hours of professional growth after receiving the Tier II credential.

##### Facilities:

- Classroom and playground square footage per enrolled pupil (a measure of over-crowdedness)
- Number of regular classrooms and number of portable classrooms
- Number of fully functioning (at least 90% of the time) toilets available to each gender.
- Percentage of classrooms with heating and air conditioning capable of maintaining temperature between 68 and 80 degrees at all times school is in session.
- Number of complaints or report regarding the presence of mold, cockroaches, mice, rats or other vermin has been made to school authorities in the reporting period.
- Pupil/teacher ratios that are in legal compliance with the amount of square footage required per student.
- Library Facilities – square footage, number of books, librarian
- Science Facilities with basic utilities (High School and Middle School)
- Class size limits for science and other lab class that are in compliance with the amount of square footage required per student
- Computer technology – Number of computers with access to the Internet; Number of fully functioning computers available for student use for a variety of instructional purposes; Number of computers with current operating systems

### Textbooks and Curriculum Materials

- The ratio to pupils of up-to-date textbooks containing curricula consistent with state standards by grade level and course
- The availability of curriculum materials to support the learning disabled and English Language Learners
- The availability of curriculum supports such as teacher's guide for textbooks

### Curriculum Offerings

- The number of pupils served in after school tutoring programs and school run day care, dropout prevention programs, and college access programs.

For high schools:

- The number of courses available that meet the requirements for admission to the University of California, as established by the Regents of the University of California. The number of available advanced placement course sections in subject areas that meet the requirements for admission to the University of California, as established by the Regents of the University of California.
- The percentages of pupils, by subgroup, taking and passing the courses that meet the requirements for admission to the University of California, as established by the Regents of the University of California.
- The percentage of pupils, by subgroup, taking advanced placement.
- Number of students participating in Dual Credit programs
- The percentage of pupils, by subgroup and course section in subject areas meeting the requirements for admission (grades of B or better) as established by the Regents of the University of California, for each of the following: (a) Algebra I by the end of grade 9. (b) Geometry by the end of grade 10. (c) Algebra II by the end of grade 12.)
- Number of students taking A-G courses as part of their graduation requirements.

### Performance Indicators K-16

We need multiple, standards-based benchmarks that inform the public about how the educational system is achieving its goals. Such measures provide the opportunity to collect and share with educators, schools, and communities the achievement of students at different grade levels and of those who have already graduated. California policymakers and educational professionals can use this comprehensive information to determine whether or not they are effectively preparing their students for successive grades and for life. Importantly, all reports of these data should include percentage of the student population assessed, and the percent English language learners included.

### Indicators of K-12 Performance

- Academic achievement of student grade cohort groups over time, school and district as defined by:
  - 3rd to 4th grade retention rate as well as other grade level retention rates specified by AB 1626 (Wayne) in 1998.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> This legislation was an attempt to reduce the number of social promotions. It was part of the accountability agreement reached regarding the Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA) but was not contained in the legislation. The California Education Code section is 4870.5

- Achievement in state criterion-referenced, standards-based exams that replace norm-referenced tests
- Portfolio evaluation containing multiple measures
- Graduation rate (included in “graduation rate above) four year dropout rates
- Estimated GPA of public high school graduates

#### Indicators of Post-Secondary Performance

- Admissions
- Community college transfer rate
- Certificate and degree completion
- Number of years taken to complete degree
- Postgraduate status

#### ***Indicators of the High School to College Transition***

- CA public high school graduates completing and passing the university preparatory curriculum
- Scores of 12<sup>th</sup> graders on AP exams
- Disposition of college applications for admission, at CSU, UC, independent colleges and universities, and out-of-state universities
- Participation in college remedial classes
- Increasing rate of college graduation within 6 years
- Increasing year-to-year persistence/retention rates
- Increasing number of students participating in Dual Credit programs

#### Community College to University/Work Transition

- Full year community college transfers to CSU, to UC, to independent colleges and universities, and out-of-state universities
- Disposition of application for admission of Community College transfer applicants
- Graduation of transfers within 3-4 years at CSU and UC
- Number of transfer students in remedial programs
- Year-to-year persistence/retention rates
- Percentage of community college students who enrolled in vocational programs who completed those programs
- Percent of graduates who have found employment specific to training and ability
- Percent of graduates who have been consistently employed in a job specific to training and ability over time, 5 years, 10 years.
- Employer satisfaction with college graduates
- Salaries for college graduates
- Survey of student satisfaction with college courses

#### University to Work Transition

- Graduation within 6 years, general, CSU, UC
- Percent of a given student cohort in remedial programs year 1, year 2, year 3
- Year-to-year persistence/retention rates
- Percent of graduates who have found employment specific to training and ability

- Percent of graduates who have been consistently employed in a job specific to training and ability over time, 5 years, 10 years
- Employer satisfaction with college graduates
- Salaries for college graduates
- Survey of student satisfaction with college courses

### **System Performance Indicators Measures of Policy and State Implementation Outcomes**

#### **Teacher Quality:**

- increased recruitment of talented people into teaching;
- increased diversity of the teaching workforce;
- the fair distribution of certified teachers across schools and communities;
- expansion of high-quality teacher preparation programs;
- expansion of high-quality teacher professional development programs;
- retention of teachers;
- retention of teachers in "hard-to-staff" schools.

#### **Student Learning**

- The percentage and rate at which students are improving academic performance and completing rigorous college preparatory courses?
- Students' attitude toward preparing academically for college and planning for a productive future are improving;
- Level of students' educational aspirations and expectations; and knowledge of college programs, costs, and financial aid opportunities?
- baseline information on students' prior course completions, grades earned, and standardized test scores;
- students' course enrollments during each program year;
- students' academic performance at each grade level (e.g., attendance, grades earned, standardized test scores);
- growth in students' knowledge of postsecondary education program options, costs, and financing options;
- students' attitudes toward education across each program year;

- students' increasing efforts to plan for and aspire toward completing a rigorous college preparatory curriculum and ultimately earning a college degree;
- Percentage of students passing college-prep courses
- Percentage of students performing at grade level by the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade in math, English/language arts (ELA), and science
- Percentage of schools with "basic track" courses in math, ELA, and science
- Is there a specific timetable/benchmarks for eliminating these courses and enrolling more students in high-level courses?

## **Appendix H**

### **Families and Students Rights to Participate in Accountability**

Students and families must be afforded:

- Access to mediation services to resolve conflicts with teachers, principals, or other school personnel;
- Resolution of conflict with teachers, principals, and other school personnel at the lowest level possible
- Information about school and district policies regarding resolving conflicts between teachers, principals, and other school personnel
- Access to mediation services to resolve conflicts with teachers, principals, or other school personnel after school and district policies and procedures have been exhausted
- Access to an ombudsperson who will advocate on behalf of students and families in their interactions with schools, districts, and the state after school and district policies and procedures have been exhausted
- “Whistle-blowing” protection for those who might expose violations of law or standards of fairness and equity.